OPINION: TOUGH DECISIONS FOR EUROPE P.22 | FEATURES: DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT P.34

BEIJING REVIEW

VOL.68 NO.18 MAY 1, 2025

北京周报 WWW.BJREVIEW.COM

POWERFUL PROTECTION

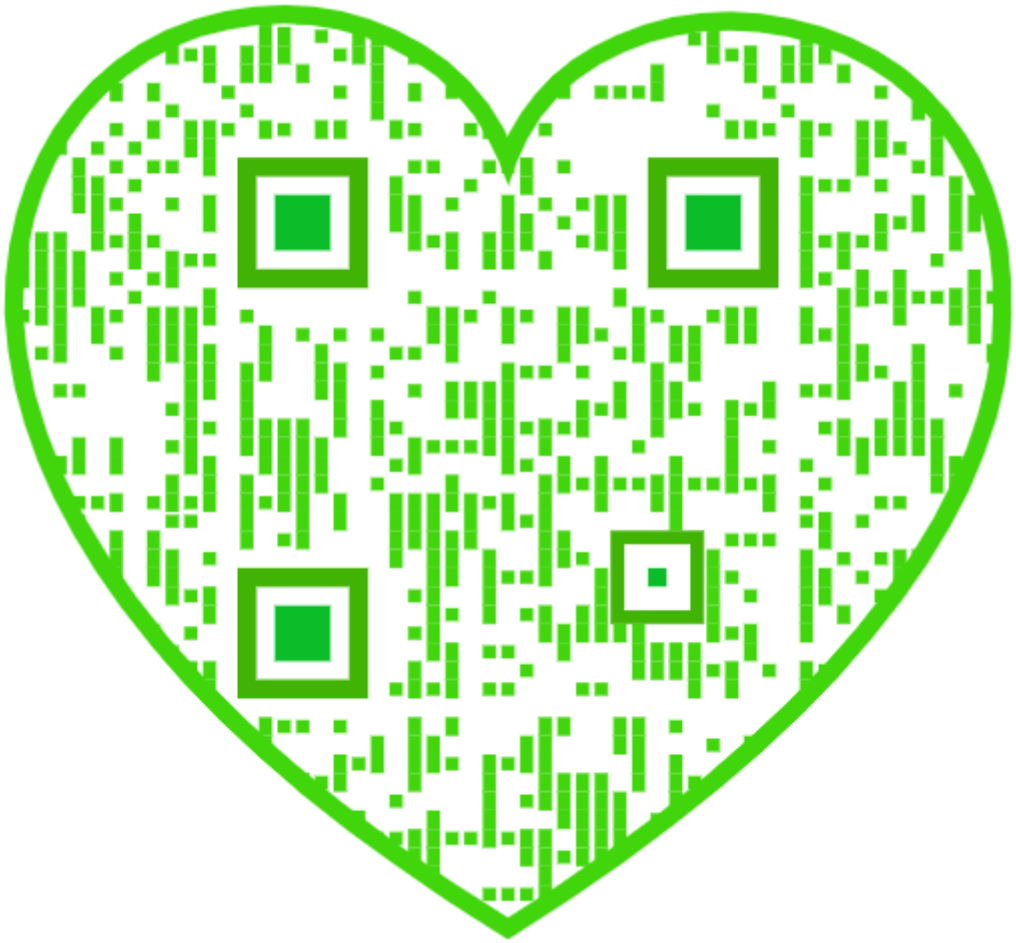
The programs and policies safeguarding workers' rights

RMB9.00
USD1.70
AUD3.00
GBP1.20
CAD2.60
CHF2.60
JPY188

ISSN 1000-9140

9 771000 914253 18

邮发代号2-922 · 国内统一连续号：CN11-1576/G2



Follow CICG Americas

And get in on the conversation

BeijingReview

BeijingReview

@BeijingReview

China Hoy

China Hoje

CONTENTS

EDITOR'S DESK

02 Safe, Equitable and Productive

THIS WEEK

COVER STORY

12 Rights on the Rise
A rising wave of reforms creates safety nets for platform workers

16 Responsive Representation
Recent successes of the All-China Federation of Trade Unions

OPINION

20 Our Power, Our Planet
A shared responsibility to protect Earth

21 The Magic Beans
Soybeans, a major casualty of U.S. tariffs

22 Discarding Disfunction
Europe must reassess its relationship with the U.S.

24 Anti-Fascist War Victory Remains Significant
An opportunity to reflect on the importance of peace

25 Nurturing Tomorrow's Innovators
Future-proofing students by adding AI studies to the curriculum

FEATURES

28 Principles for Progress
Chongqing as an example of the CPC's governance philosophy

30 Echoes Over Quzhou
Carrying forward a friendship that transcends time and space

32 Teaching Beyond Limits
Giving children with disabilities the tools to thrive

34 Just the Way You Are
New autism initiatives combine education, therapy and community

36 Ancient Earth, Modern Recognition
UNESCO lists two more of China's geoparks

38 Silk Road Surge
From pioneer to overnight sensation, DHgate's 20-year journey

40 A Future in Farewells
Evolving attitudes toward the end of life make a difference

42 Observing China
Domestic reality vs. global rhetoric through an American's eyes

CULTURE

46 A New Race of Robots
Beijing hosts world-first robot half-marathon

FORUM

48 Should Electronic Screens Give Way to Blackboards?

Cover Design: Wang Yajuan

©2025 Beijing Review, all rights reserved.

MEDIA PARTNER

www.bjreview.com zinio amazon Follow us on YouTube

BREAKING NEWS » SCAN ME » Using a QR code reader

Please recycle

北京周报
BEIJING REVIEW
A News Weekly Magazine
Published Since 1958

President: Li Yafang
Associate Editor in Chief: Liu Yunyun
Vice Presidents: He Peng, Gao Dingbo, Yu Shujun
Program Supervisor: Zeng Wenhui

Executive Editor: Yan Wei
Production Director: Yao Bin
Editors: Wang Hairong, Zhang Shasha, Lu Yan
Researcher: Lan Xinzhen
Editorial Consultants: Elsbeth van Paridon, G.P. Wilson
Reporters: Ji Jing, Kang Caiqi, Li Qing, Li Wenhan, Li Xiaoyang, Liang Xiao, Ma Miaomiao, Pan Xiaoqiao, Peng Jiawei, Tao Xing, Tao Zihui, Wang Jun, Wang Ruohan, Yuan Yuan, Zhang Yage
Photographer: Wei Yao
Art: Li Shigong
Design Director: Wang Yajuan
Chief Designer: Cui Xiaodong
Designer: Wang Boyan

Editorial Administrator: Zeng Wenhui
Planning Director: Xu Bei
Deputy Planning Director: Li Nan
World News Director: Ding Ying
World News Deputy Director: Li Fangfang
Director of Digital Media: Yu Shujun
Director of Strategic Research: Zan Jifang
Deputy Director of Strategic Research: Lu Ling

Administration: Zhang Yajie
International Cooperation: Sun Xuan
Legal Counsel: Yue Cheng

North America Bureau (New York City)
Chief: Yu Shujun
Executive Assistant: Zhao Wei
Tel/Fax: 1-201-792-0334
E-mail: yushujun@cicgamericas.com
Latin America Bureau (Mexico City)
Chief: Miao Ye
Tel: 52-55-55127271
Fax: 52-55-55332027
E-mail: chinahoymx@gmail.com
Peru Office (Lima)
Chief: Meng Kexin
Tel: 0051-959212702
E-mail: revistachinaperu@gmail.com

General Editorial Office
Tel: 86-10-68996252
Fax: 86-10-68326628
Editorial Desk
Tel: 86-10-68996250
Partnerships
Tel: 86-10-68995807
E-mail: yecong@cicgamericas.com
Distribution
Tel: 86-10-68310644
E-mail: circulation@cicgamericas.com

Published every Thursday by
CICG Center for Americas, 24 Baiwanzhuang Lu,
Beijing 100037, China
Overseas Distributor: China International Book Trading Corporation (Guoji Shudian), P. O. BOX 399,
Beijing 100044, China
Tel: 86-10-68413849, 1-416-497-8096 (Canada)
Fax: 86-10-68412166
E-mail: fp@mail.cibtc.com.cn
Website: http://www.cibtc.com
General Distributor for Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan:
Peace Book Co. Ltd.
17/Fl, Paramount Bldg, 12 Ka Yip St, Chai Wan, HK
Tel: 852-28046687 **Fax:** 852-28046409

Beijing Review (ISSN 1000-9140 USPS 2812) is published weekly in the United States for US$64.00 per year by Cypress Books, 360 Swift Avenue, Suite 48, South San Francisco, CA 94080
News Postage Paid at South San Francisco, CA 94080
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Beijing Review*, Cypress Books, 360 Swift Avenue, Suite 48, South San Francisco, CA 94080

Safe, Equitable and Productive

As a still developing country with a huge population, China has needed to overcome numerous challenges in the administration of its labor relations and social security over recent decades. Now, the accelerating emergence of new forms of employment is making the protection of labor rights a particularly and increasingly complex task.

Labor relations in China first became increasingly complex and diverse during the development of the socialist market economy, which began in the late 1970s. This system aims to combine the efficiency often characteristic of a market economy with equity associated with socialism. Since then, the government has formulated several laws and regulations to safeguard labor relations. Systems related to the protection of labor rights have also been improved, including medical insurance, pension insurance, unemployment insurance, work-related injury insurance and maternity insurance.

All of these mechanisms aim to ensure workers enjoy equal job opportunities, reasonable remuneration, safe working environments, social insurance and other welfare. The government has been enhancing the supervision and investigation of labor rights issues, cracking down on illegal employment practices. Protection of labor rights is not only a legal issue, but also a key factor for economic, social and political development, which is vital for the country's long-term prosperity.

In line with the principles of mutual respect, equality and mutual benefit, China participates in international labor affairs. It conducts exchanges and cooperation with international institutions including the International Labor Organization, the United Nations Development Program, the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank, as well as with many other countries, playing a positive role in promoting employment, eradicating poverty and safeguarding workers' legitimate rights and interests.

Like other countries, China must work continuously to address new challenges in the protection of labor rights brought about by economic transformation and technological innovation. For instance, protection of workers in new employment forms such as food delivery workers and vloggers must be improved. Excessive overtime in some businesses also needs to be solved. In addressing these challenges, and the many others that will emerge in the future, China aims to create a safe, equitable and productive working environment that is conducive to its continued upward trajectory. **BR**

WRITE TO US

Send an e-mail: editorsoffice@cicgamericas.com

Please provide your name and address along with your submissions. Submissions may be edited.

CHINA.....RMB9.00 U.S.A.....USD1.70
AUSTRALIA.....AUD3.00 UK.....GBP1.20
CANADA.....CAD2.60 SWITZERLAND.....CHF2.60
JAPAN.....JPY188 EUROPE.....EUR1.90
TÜRKIYE.....YTL5.00 HK.....HKD9.30 NEPAL.....RS40

主管单位：中国外文出版发行事业局
主办单位：中国外文局美洲传播中心（北京周报社）
出版单位：中国外文局美洲传播中心（北京周报社）
地址：北京市西城区百万庄大街24号 邮编：100037
编委会：李雅芳 贺鹏 王宁 刘云云 高丁博 于淑均 曾文卉
主任：李雅芳
主编：闫威
总编室电话：(010) 68996252 发行部电话：(010) 68310644
印刷：北京华联印刷有限公司
北京周报 英文版2025年 第18期 ISSN 1000-9140
国内统一连续出版物号：CN11-1576/G2 邮发代号：2-922
广告许可证0171号 北京市期刊登记证第733号
国内零售价：人民币9.00元

XINHUA

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

A naval vessel open day is held to mark the 76th anniversary of the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) Navy in Qingdao, Shandong Province, on April 22.

The PLA Navy celebrated its 76th anniversary on April 23, reaffirming its commitment to becoming a world-class naval force dedicated to safeguarding both national security and global peace.

Over 30 active PLA Navy vessels opened to the public in late April to celebrate the founding anniversary of the naval force.

XINHUA

Soaring in the Sky

Kite enthusiasts gather at the 42nd Weifang International Kite Festival in Weifang, Shandong Province, on April 19.

Stabilizing Job Market

China will extend key unemployment insurance policies through 2025 to help companies retain jobs and support workers in enhancing their skills, authorities announced on April 22.

The announcement was made through a circular, jointly issued by the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security, the Ministry of Finance and the State Taxation Administration, outlining measures to help enterprises maintain stable employment.

Until the end of 2025, companies that do not lay off employees or minimize layoffs will continue to receive refunds of a certain percentage of unemployment insurance premiums paid in the previous year, according to the policy.

To help workers improve their skills, the extended policy relaxes eligibility requirements and expands coverage for skills-upgrading subsidies.

These measures also ensure continued provision of basic living allowances—including unemployment benefits, basic medical insurance coverage, and support for older unemployed individuals.

China has set a target of maintaining the surveyed urban unemployment rate at around 5.5 percent in 2025, while aiming to create over 12 million new urban jobs this year. The average surveyed urban unemployment rate stood at 5.3 percent in the first quarter of 2025.

Grassland Restoration

China has been steadily promoting grassland restoration in recent years, with an annual restoration of over 30,667 square km of grassland, an area comparable to the land area of Belgium, Xinhua News Agency reported on April 22.

Li Yongjun, an official with the National Forestry and Grassland Administration, told a press conference that the Central Government has invested 110 billion yuan ($15 billion) in supporting grassland protection and restoration during the 14th Five-Year Plan (2021-25) period.

Forestry and grassland authorities across the country have intensified efforts to combat illegal activities such as grassland reclamation and unauthorized occupation.

Thanks to the country's persistent efforts, the ecological quality of grasslands has experienced a historic shift from "general degradation" in the early years of this century to the current "overall improvement," Li said.

However, the official warned, the country still faces a challenging task in grassland restoration. Most of China's grasslands are located in arid, semi-arid, cold and high-altitude areas with harsh natural conditions.

"Currently, around 70 percent of the grasslands are still suffering from different degrees of degradation, and the situation of grassland protection and restoration remains serious," he said.

New Majors

The Ministry of Education has introduced 29 new majors to higher education institutions in response to the evolving needs of national strategies and the pursuit of high-quality development.

The ministry announced on April 22 updates to the catalog of undergraduate majors in general colleges and universities, adding majors such as carbon neutrality science and engineering and international cruise management, marine science and technology, health and medical security, smart molecular engineering, medical device and equipment engineering, spatiotemporal information engineering, aviation sports, AI education, smart audio-visual engineering, and digital drama.

To facilitate a more agile response to national strategies, the ministry has implemented a new mechanism allowing swift adjustments to the curriculum in response to newly prioritized strategic areas.

Addressing the rapid development needs of the low-altitude economy, six universities, including Beihang University, have been guided to add a major in low-altitude technology and engineering.

The low-altitude economy covers aerial economic activities that take place below 1,000 meters.

Removing Import Ban

China has launched a pilot program allowing the use of imported *calculus bovis*—cattle gallstones—in traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) production under specified conditions, in an effort to ease the supply shortage of the material, which is used widely in TCM.

Calculus bovis sourced from countries or regions not subject to mad cow disease import bans and compliant with China's customs quarantine and pharmaceutical quality inspection requirements will be permitted for trial use in TCM manufacturing, the National Medical Products Administration and the General Administration of Customs said in a joint statement released on April 21.

The pilot program will cover 12 provincial-level regions, including Beijing and Tianjin, and will remain in effect for two years. Upon evaluation of the outcomes of this pilot program, authorities will progressively expand the use of imported *calculus bovis* nationwide, the statement said.

The program has detailed requirements for the application of imported *calculus bovis* and related processing, storage and production procedures.

Calculus bovis has historically been a critical source for TCM ingredients to treat high fever, convulsion and stroke.

Healthcare Opening Up

China's healthcare sector is making steady progress in opening up to foreign investment and expertise, with more than 150 joint-venture and wholly overseas-invested medical institutions now operating nationwide, Jiao Yahui, a senior official with the National Health Commission, announced at a press briefing in Beijing on April 21.

Over 1,500 healthcare professionals from outside the Chinese mainland are practicing in China on a short-term basis, Jiao said.

These developments come as China rolls out policies and measures to expand foreign participation in its health care services sector, as part of a broader effort to open up the country's service industry.

The latest moves include allowing qualified foreign doctors and those from Hong Kong and Macao special administrative regions and Taiwan Province to open clinics in designated pilot regions. The measures also support short-term practice for overseas medical professionals, with streamlined and simplified approval processes.

These actions fall under a work plan to expand access to China's services sector for foreign investment and professionals, which was recently released by the Ministry of Commerce.

Cargo Spacecraft

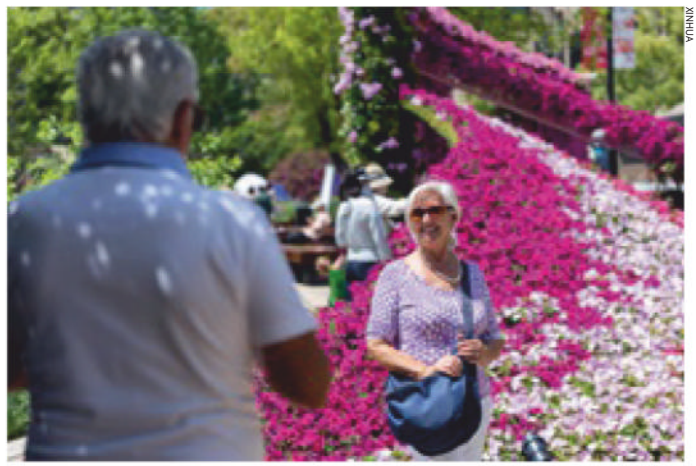
A life-size model of China's next-generation cargo craft *Qingzhou*, designed for future in-orbit supply delivery, met the public for the first time on April 24, China's Space Day.

Qingzhou, which means "Light Ship" in Chinese, has been designed to be smaller in size and lighter in weight, compared to the existing *Tianzhou* (*Sky Ship*) cargo craft.

Developed by the Innovation Academy for Microsatellites of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, the new launch vehicle weighs about 5 tons and is capable of sending at least 1.8 tons of supplies into space. It features an internal volume of 27 cubic meters. It can accommodate up to 300 liters for cold-chain transportation, enabling taikonauts (Chinese astronauts) to enjoy more and fresher fruits and vegetables during their space journeys.

According to Shu Rong, commander of the *Qingzhou* project, the spacecraft has been developed at a lower cost, thanks to numerous technological innovations and a more efficient launch process.

Apart from delivering supplies to China's space station, *Qingzhou* will also provide commercial cargo services in the future, aiming to bring economic and social benefits, Shu said.



XINHUA

Flower Show

A tourist poses for photos at a venue of the 2025 Shanghai International Flower Show in Huangpu District of Shanghai, on April 18. The 2025 Shanghai International Flower Show opened that same day with two main venues, five sub-venues and 15 exhibition spots across the city.

XINHUA

Sanxingdui Ruins Recreated

An immersive art exhibition of Sanxingdui culture at the National Maritime Museum of China in Tianjin Municipality on April 22. The Sanxingdui Ruins site was discovered in the late 1920s in Guanghan City, Sichuan Province, and is dubbed one of the world's greatest archaeological finds of the 20th century.

Pilot Free Trade Zones

China has released a guideline for improving the country's pilot free trade zones (FTZs) to further promote high-standard opening up and high-quality development.

The guideline, issued by the Communist Party of China Central Committee and the State Council, the country's highest state administrative organ, called for promoting the optimization and upgrading of trade in goods, invigorating the development of trade in services, and supporting innovative development in digital trade.

White list systems will be established for imported medical research and development items as well as imported food with medicinal values, the guideline said, while also calling for the application of digital bills and signatures.

Investment liberalization and facilitation should be advanced, and the level of opening up should be enhanced to attract and utilize foreign capital through greater effort.

The guideline urged the promotion of the integration of innovation and industrial chains, and expanding international sci-tech exchange and cooperation.

Work should be done in building a modern industrial system, enhancing the modernization level of industrial chains, promoting the establishment of advanced industrial clusters and facilitating the coordinated development of industries in the pilot FTZs, it said.

The guideline also pledged to facilitate cross-border data flow and financial opening up.

Forex Market

In the first quarter (Q1) of 2025, China's net inflow of cross-border capital from trade in goods totaled $206.3 billion, registering rapid year-on-year growth, Li Bin, deputy head of the State Administration of Foreign Exchange, said on April 22.

Additionally, foreign holdings of domestic bonds increased by a net total of $26.9 billion from February to March.

As of April 21, the onshore renminbi spot exchange rate against the U.S. dollar stood at 7.288, appreciating by 0.1 percent from the end of 2024. The two-way fluctuation of the RMB exchange rate is a normal market movement, which also reflects the support provided by underlying economic fundamentals, according to Li.

He said the administration will continue deepening reform and opening up in the foreign exchange (forex) sector, and introduce policies to support cross-border trade and facilitate cross-border investment and financing, aiming to stabilize foreign trade and foreign investment.

Forex regulators will continue to strengthen their monitoring of the forex situation, maintain exchange rate flexibility and effectively leverage the exchange rate's role as an automatic stabilizer for the macro economy and the international balance of payments, Li added.

At the same time, efforts will be made to enrich China's macro-prudential toolkit for the management of cross-border capital flows, firmly correct pro-cyclical market behaviors, guard against risks of exchange rate overshooting and abnormal cross-border capital movements, and safeguard national economic and financial security.

Bank Wealth Management

China's bank wealth management market enjoyed steady growth momentum in Q1 of this year, industry data indicated on April 22.

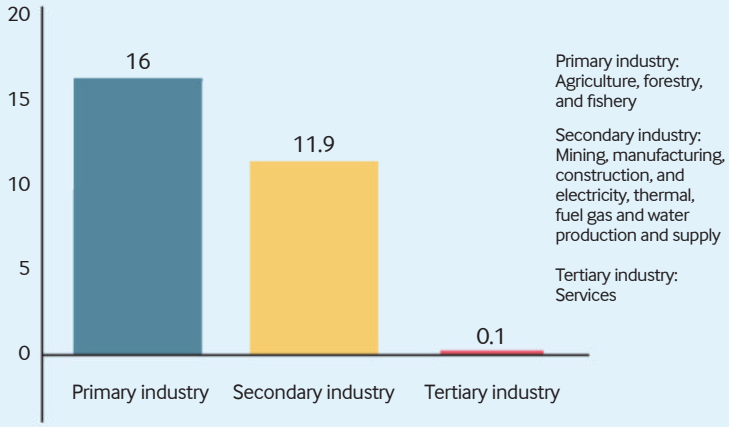
The balance of wealth management products stood at 29.14 trillion yuan ($4 trillion) at the end of March, up 9.41 percent year on year, according to the latest data provided by the China Banking Wealth Management Registration and Depository Center.

By the end of Q1, the number of wealth management products had increased by 0.67 percent year on year to 40,600, offered by a combination of 215 banking institutions and 31 wealth management companies, the center said.

NUMBERS

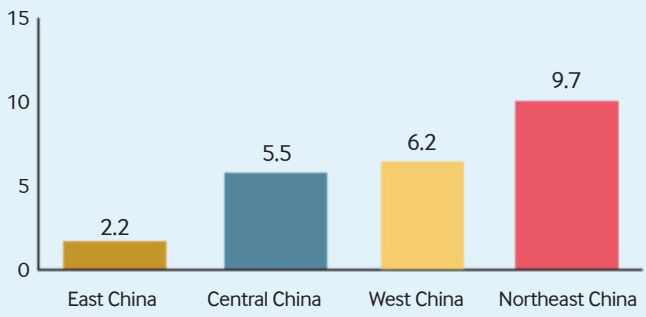
Fixed Assets Investment Growth by Sector

January-February (% y.o.y.)



Fixed Assets Investment Growth by Region

January- February (% y.o.y.)



Meanwhile, support for the real economy from bank wealth management products stood at nearly 20 trillion yuan ($2.7 trillion), it added.

The number of investors holding wealth management products in the banking market had risen by 6.73 percent year on year to 126 million by the end of March, the data showed.

E-Commerce Growth

China's e-commerce sector reported steady growth in Q1 of this year, boosted by the country's pro-consumption policies such as its large-scale consumer goods trade-in program, the Ministry of Commerce said on April 21.

Official data show that China's online retail sales totaled 3.6 trillion yuan ($500 billion) in Q1, with online retail sales of physical goods increasing by 5.7 percent.

There was also a 7.4-percent increase in online sales of digital products in this period, the ministry said.

It noted that, boosted by the release of quality films, China's online entertainment sales volume grew by 40 percent in the first three months.

In Q1, the Central Government and enterprises worked together to accelerate the integration of domestic and foreign trade to cope with external risks, the ministry said, noting that more than 10 e-commerce platforms have taken swift measures to deliver quality foreign trade products to domestic households through e-commerce channels.

Private Enterprises

Private enterprises in China continued to expand steadily amid government efforts to spur growth in both the private sector and the broader economy, according to data from the State Administration for Market Regulation (SAMR), the top market regulator, released on April 21.

The number of private enterprises in the country had exceeded 57 million by the end of March, accounting for 92.3 percent of all businesses nationwide, according to data from the SAMR.

In Q1, 1.979 million private companies were established, an increase of 7.1 percent from a year ago and outpacing the average growth recorded over the past three years, the SAMR said.

Over 40 percent of the newly established private firms in Q1 were related to new technologies, products, business forms and models, SAMR data showed.

The number of private enterprises in Internet and information technology services grew the fastest, increasing by 18 percent from a year ago.

In particular, the digital economy sector saw the addition of 274,000 new private enterprises in Q1, accounting for 13.9 percent of all newly registered private businesses.

Through digital transformation, low-carbon initiatives and global development, China's private sector has strengthened its competitive edge and unleashed a surge of innovation, the market regulator noted.

5G Base Stations

The number of 5G base stations in China topped over 4.39 million by the end of March, with the user penetration rate reaching 75.9 percent, the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology (MIIT) said on April 18.

China's cyber infrastructure has continued to improve and its digital industry has scaled new heights, Xie Shaofeng, chief engineer with the MIIT, said at a press conference.

Digital technologies, represented by 5G and large AI models, have developed rapidly, Xie said, noting that the digital sector achieved a year-on-year revenue growth of 8.2 percent in the first two months.

In Q1, China's industrial sector posted steady performance, with improvements in the structure and advances in fostering new quality productive forces, according to Xie.

(Source: National Bureau of Statistics)

XINHUA

KAZAKHSTAN

Participants in costumes inspired by Chinese culture pose for photos at the 2025 International Chinese Language Day (April 20) event in Almaty on April 19

REPUBLIC OF KOREA

Ousted President Yoon Suk-yeol attends the second hearing of his criminal trial over insurrection charges, in Seoul on April 21

XINHUA

XINHUA

INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND

Chief Economist Pierre-Olivier Gourinchas (second left) speaks at a press briefing on the fund's World Economic Outlook in Washington, D.C., the U.S., on April 22. The fund downgraded its global growth forecast in 2025 to 2.8 percent, a hefty 0.5-percentage-point decrease from its January projection

RUSSIA

A photo exhibition commemorates the 80th anniversary of the victory in the Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression and the World Anti-Fascist War at the Chinese Embassy in Moscow on April 18

XINHUA

VATICAN CITY

A file photo of Pope Francis waving to the crowd as he attends an event in St. Peter's Square on March 31, 2024. Pope Francis, the 266th pontiff of the Roman Catholic Church, died on April 21 at the age of 88

XINHUA

UNITED STATES

Demonstrators protest against the Donald Trump administration's policies in New York City on April 19. Thousands of protesters took to the streets in cities across the U.S. in what they described as part of a "National Day of Action" against Trump's policies

SHENZHOU-20 CREW

Chinese astronauts **Chen Dong** (center), **Chen Zhongrui** (right) and **Wang Jie** entered orbit for the *Shenzhou-20* spaceflight mission on April 24. They will stay at China's *Tiangong* space station for approximately six months.

Prior to commanding this mission, Chen Dong was a member of the *Shenzhou-11* (October-November 2016) mission and commander of the *Shenzhou-14* mission (June-December 2022). He is the first among China's second cohort of astronauts to carry out three spaceflight missions.

Chen Zhongrui and Wang both come from the third cohort of astronauts and *Shenzhou-20* is their first spaceflight mission. Before being selected for the space program, Chen Zhongrui was an air force pilot and Wang was an engineer at the China Academy of Space Technology of the China Aerospace Science and Technology Corp.

Retirement Concierges

Rednet.cn

April 24

As China's aging population continues to grow, demand has surged for services that help seniors navigate healthcare, financial planning and other aspects of retirement life. In response, positions in a new profession—often labeled "senior planning consultant" or "retirement planner" have emerged on recruitment websites, promising easy jobs with high salaries, which can amount to 100,000 yuan ($13,700) a month. Responsibilities include providing tailored health-management plans, optimizing investment strategies and finding ideal retirement homes.

A qualified retirement planner should possess a certain level of medical knowledge and financial expertise, as well as strong analytical and planning skills. In reality, the field's low entry barriers and lack of regulatory oversight have resulted in wildly uneven service quality.

In the face of these challenges, all parties should work together to establish a robust legal framework, codify clear industry standards, conduct regular qualification reviews and establish professional associations to foster the healthy growth of this nascent sector.

Global Gourmet Goes Local

Lifeweek

April 14

From Yunnan Province's Puer tea to Zhejiang Province's mitten crab, regional specialties have long offered a glimpse into China's rich and varied food culture. In recent years, however, a new wave of regional products has sprouted across the country, reflecting a broader shift in the

"If the U.S. side truly wishes to solve tariff-related issues with China through dialogue and negotiation, it must stop threatening and extorting, and conduct the dialogue on the basis of equality, respect and mutual benefit."

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson **Guo Jiakun**, at a daily news briefing on April 23, in response to the latest comments made by U.S. President Donald Trump and Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent on trade tensions between the two countries

"Strengthening regional ties through more efficient border processes, lower trade costs, less friction, clear rules of origin—these can boost trade volumes and support more stable and diversified growth."

Ajay Banga, World Bank Group (WBG) President, at an event during the 2025 Spring Meetings of the WBG and the International Monetary Fund on April 22, noting lower tariffs are good for everybody

country's agricultural landscape.

Consider caviar: China is now the world's largest producer and exporter of caviar, and Quzhou, a small city in Zhejiang, is now a top supplier for Kaluga Queen, the world's largest caviar producer.

Meanwhile, Linqu, a small town in Shandong Province, has emerged as a major hub for foie gras production—another long-imported delicacy commonly used in haute cuisine. Today, local production of this premium food rivals that of France's Landes in both scale and output.

These new specialties stand in stark contrast against traditional specialty products, which prioritize scarcity and therefore are often confined to local, small-scale production. The newcomers, however, are spearheaded by large enterprises and utilize all kinds of advanced technologies to scale up production.

To ensure the healthy growth of these nascent sectors, more efforts should go into developing new breeds and cultivating a host of quality, trustworthy brands. In this way, these new specialties can secure a lasting place on tables both at home and abroad.

Coding Culture in Global Games

People.cn
April 24

Chinese games are marching into overseas markets at an accelerating pace, with overseas revenue for homegrown video games exceeding $18 billion in 2024—a 13.4-percent year-on-year increase.

Since its inception in China, the gaming industry has been driven by continuous breakthroughs in AI, game engine technologies and graphics rendering systems. Meanwhile, advanced gaming technologies have also been applied to a wide range of fields, including film production, smart city planning, autonomous driving and medical diagnosis.

The success of *Black Myth: Wukong*, a hit action role-playing game developed by Chinese firm Game Science, is part of a broader trend. Since its global debut last September, *Delta Force*, a Chinese tactical first-person shooter (FPS) video game, has soared to the top of download charts in over 160 countries; as of now, *Arena Breakout*, another FPS developed by China, has amassed more than 180 million global registrations.

When international players enter these virtual worlds, they find themselves immersed in China's rich cultural narratives. This connection has also transformed video games into a platform for people worldwide to discover more about China and its advanced technology.

PARA-ATHLETE WINS SPORTS 'OSCAR'

Chinese paralympic swimmer **Jiang Yuyan** was named the Laureus World Sportsperson of the Year with a Disability on April 21.

Jiang, who lost her right arm and right leg in a childhood accident, won seven gold medals at the Paris 2024 Paralympic Summer Games, setting two world records and three Paralympic records. She was the most decorated athlete across all delegations at the games.

When receiving the honor, Jiang said she hoped to inspire others who have suffered life-changing accidents or disabilities.

Established in 1999, the Laureus World Sports Awards, often referred to as the "Oscars of sport," is an annual award ceremony honoring individuals and teams from the world of sports along with sporting achievements throughout the year.

"The *BYD Shenzhen*... is more than just a transport ship, it serves as a 'maritime bridge' connecting Chinese innovation with the global market, enabling users around the world to share in the benefits of Chinese technology."

Wang Junbao, General Manager of BYD's public business division, on April 22, as the leading Chinese electric car maker launched the world's largest cargo ship for vehicles, which is expected to provide stable and low-carbon logistics support for BYD's global delivery of new-energy vehicles

"At a time of profound changes unseen in a century, reading plays a crucial role in nurturing globally competent talents and serves as the cornerstone for enhancing international communication abilities."

Wang Dinghua, Secretary of the Communist Party of China Beijing Foreign Studies University Committee, at an event marking the 30th World Book Day that fell on April 23

COVER STORY

RIGHTS ON THE RISE

The improvement of labor protections for new occupations By Lu Yan

XINHUA

A job fair in Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province, on April 19

"Finally, the company will provide us delivery riders with social insurance. It feels like a dream come true." This sentiment, expressed by 36-year-old delivery rider Li Wenmin of Chinese online services platform Meituan, captures the growing optimism among a workforce that has long faced precarious employment conditions. After seven years of navigating the bustling streets and alleys as a delivery rider, Li shared his relief and excitement with his family.

For Li, flexible working hours and the potential for a decent income have always been appealing, but the lack of social security has been a constant concern—both for him and his loved ones. With the announcement made earlier this year that online platforms, including industry leaders Meituan and JD.com, will start buying social insurance for full-time and stable part-time delivery riders, Li feels a newfound sense of security and stability for the future.

Many delivery riders previously operated without social insurance as they are usually classified as independent contractors rather than employees. While this classification allowed for flexibility in work schedules, it also meant that traditional employee benefits were not provided.

However, recent developments signal a transformative shift in how the gig economy recognizes and supports its workers. Companies are now taking steps to ensure their delivery riders receive the necessary protections—an evolution in the labor landscape. As these protections become more widespread, riders are beginning to view their roles as stable career options, fostering a sense of belonging and professional identity within the workforce.

This trend extends beyond the gig economy to encompass all new occupations that have emerged in recent years as the country's workforce diversifies and evolves.

Expanding insurance network

In China, employers are mandated to share the social security premium costs of their full-time employees, while contractors and self-employed individuals can contribute to the social welfare fund voluntarily. Employers are required to contribute to five major insurance schemes, namely, pension insurance, medical insurance, ▶▶

unemployment insurance, work injury insurance and maternity insurance, as well as a housing fund. Contribution rates and benefits differ by city due to localized management.

In the past, flexible workers, such as food delivery riders, were excluded as they lacked formal labor contracts. The recent introduction of social insurance in the sector has also led delivery riders to reevaluate their careers.

Gu Enrui, a Meituan delivery rider who has been with the company for five years, shared her perspective with newspaper *Lanzhou Daily*. "I started making deliveries after having my second child, initially thinking it would just be a temporary job that allowed me to take care of my kids. Over time, I found the income to be quite good, so I decided to keep doing it," she said. "I used to feel like a temporary worker without any security, but now that we have social insurance, I feel I can settle down and further develop my career in this industry."

In early April, Meituan announced plans to expand social insurance coverage for its food delivery riders, launching pilot programs for pension insurance in Quanzhou, Fujian Province, and Nantong, Jiangsu Province.

The program is open to all riders in these areas, covering some 22,000 individuals, with plans to gradually expand nationwide. Riders can enroll in employee social insurance as flexible workers. Under the pilot scheme, the company will subsidize 50 percent of the costs for those who participate on a voluntary basis and meet the company's eligibility threshold.

E-commerce giant JD.com has established formal labor relationships with its delivery riders by hiring them as full-time staff. Under this arrangement, the company fully covers all social insurance costs for its riders.

The news of social insurance for riders has also attracted fresh talent to the delivery sector. "This morning alone, I interviewed four new candidates. In previous years, we might only have one or two applicants at this time," Liang Shiwei, manager of the Meituan delivery station at Lanzhou Jiaotong University, told *Lanzhou Daily*.

Currently, the delivery station has 45 riders, with an average tenure of one to three years. Liang notes that delivery riders have historically experienced high turnover, often viewing their roles as temporary. However, with the implementation of social insurance, riders will no longer be "running bare without protection." This shift not only enhances their sense of professional identity and security but also helps reduce turnover and improve service quality.

"With social insurance, experienced riders can work with peace of mind and stay in the industry longer, while also more newcomers will be attracted. This benefits the sector's long-term growth and sustainability," Liang added.

In recent years, the delivery industry has seen a surge in protective policies for riders. Since July 2022, under the guidance of the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security (MHRSS), Meituan has launched a pilot program for occupational injury insurance for people working for the platform, investing 1.4 billion yuan ($191 million) to cover riders across seven pilot provinces and cities. This initiative will eventually cover all riders nationwide.

XINHUA

A delivery worker loads packages into an autonomous vehicle for delivery in Suzhou, Anhui Province, in November 2024

Flexibility and security

Zhang Chenggang, an associate professor at the School of Labor Economics at Capital University of Economics and Business in Beijing and director of the school's China New Employment Form Research Center, believes that the move by JD.com and Meituan to offer social insurance to delivery riders has drawn public attention to the rights of workers in new forms of employment. "This initiative is expected to set a precedent for the entire gig economy and flexible workforce," he told *Beijing Review*.

China currently has one of

the world's largest social security systems. As of last September, MHRSS data showed that the number of people covered by basic old-age insurance, unemployment insurance and work-related injury insurance had reached 1.07 billion, 245 million, and 301 million, respectively. Yet gaps remain, especially for the large flexible workforce.

The All-China Federation of Trade Unions estimates 84 million workers are now in new employment forms. However, their rights are not as well defined as those of workers in traditional industries, leading to disputes. From 2020 to 2024, Chinese courts handled approximately 420,000 civil dispute cases tied to such jobs, official statistics showed.

In December 2024, the Supreme People's Court addressed these challenges by issuing judicial guidelines to protect workers in gig roles—including delivery riders, livestreamers and ride-hailing drivers—while balancing platform economy growth. At a press conference, it released a list of typical cases on wage disputes and labor conflict resolution in emerging industries.

"The Labor Contract Law of China mainly addresses traditional employment types, making it difficult to apply to the characteristics and needs of flexible employment. This results in the inadequate protection of the legal rights of flexible workers in terms of wages, working hours and social security," Jia Yu, President of the Shanghai High People's Court, told *Legal Daily* newspaper.

Jia suggested revising the law to further protect flexible workers' wages, standardize working hours and clarify the obligations and coverage related to social insurance contributions.

XINHUA

A livestream host, dressed in the traditional Han Chinese attire, sells flowers online in Shanghai on April 10

Jia added that to address the issue of rights protection for new employment groups, all parties must work together to form a consensus.

Local authorities have also stepped up conflict resolution by implementing clearer guidelines for labor rights and facilitating communication between workers and employers. In doing so, they foster a more supportive environment for flexible workers.

For example, on April 3, Fengtai District in Beijing officially launched a one-stop mediation center for labor disputes related to new forms of employment at its public employment demonstration service base. This center will provide a comprehensive range of services, including dispute mediation, legal consultation, legal aid, assessments for work-related injuries, mobile hearings, judicial confirmations, prosecutorial duties, career guidance and skill enhancement. It intends to create a sustainable and precise framework for protecting the rights of workers in emerging industries, ensuring that their rights are fully safeguarded throughout the entire process.

"In a large and unevenly developed country like China, the widespread implementation of social security cannot be achieved overnight," Zhang said. He believes that the key lies in designing a social security system that, based on China's specific conditions, protects rights, does not hinder employment and operates sustainably, while also promoting a more equitable and reasonable income distribution.

"The ultimate goal is to ensure that everyone participating in economic activities can receive returns that match their contributions, enjoy decent work conditions and have the opportunity for a dignified retirement, truly realizing the development philosophy of sharing the benefits of growth with the people," he concluded. **BR**

Copyedited by Elsbeth van Paridon
Comments to luyan@cicgamericas.com

COVER STORY

RESPONSIVE REPRESENTATION

By Immanuel Ness

Over the past 40 years, the development of market socialism has significantly expanded the size of China's urban working class as rural workers have relocated to urban centers. The rapid expansion of China's urban working class has been instrumental in shaping the nation's economy, which is both dedicated to meaningful technological innovation and devoted to modernization to improve China's standard of living. The expansion of market socialism has posed considerable challenges to ensure China's working class maintains its preeminent position. The All-China Federation of Trade Unions (ACFTU) has been at the leading edge of defending and improving the conditions of the working class during the transformation of the economy. Ever since the opening of the market economy in 1978, the federation has effectively applied itself to continuously adapt to the realities of China's modernization and technological development through proactively responding to anticipated changes in the workplace and responding to working class interests. Economic modernization compels the ACFTU to develop the capacity to serve a far more diverse working class in manufacturing, construction, social services and, since the 2010s, laborers in the digital economy.

My recent research shows the ACFTU has successfully mobilized the Chinese working class in all sectors of the economy—from industrial enterprises to the platform economy—a formidable accomplishment for any trade union federation and a colossal endeavor for the world's largest trade union. In 2024, an estimated 400 million workers were members of the ACFTU. Remarkably, the ACFTU represents more workers than the total of all trade unions in the world as China seeks to advance the interests of all workers. To accommodate unionization, Chinese labor law grants workers a legal right to join and form their own unions. Public and private employers must recognize and bargain with ACFTU-affiliated unions to negotiate higher wages and ensure safe working conditions.

ILO endorsement

The International Labor Organization (ILO) of the United Nations has applauded the ACFTU's monumental achievements, particularly in its representation of workers in the digital economy.

In the last decade, its organization of workers in the rapidly expanding digital economy and new forms of employment has been unmatched by any trade union in the world. Notably, the ACFTU is organizing digital workers employed in the burgeoning logistics industries, including trucking, ride hailing and delivery, comprising approximately 200 million workers. Digital platform workers face distinct challenges, including regulating their hours of work and meeting wage standards. In China, most digital workers are employed for identifiable technology firms in the ride hailing and delivery sectors and beyond. The ACFTU is organizing workers who are independent contractors to delivery platforms by ensuring minimum wage standards are maintained. The ACFTU has had extraordinary success in doing so, mobilizing 24 percent of these workers into the union, an achievement that sets it apart from any union in the world. No union in any country has organized even 1 percent of workers in the platform economy due to fierce employer resistance to recognizing digital laborers as employees, a disincentive for trade unions to organize workers in the industry. At best, workers in the UK and the U.S. have formed independent associations with scarce support from established unions.

Accordingly, due to its ongoing success organizing workers in the digital economy, the ACFTU is providing organizational assistance to unions outside China in protecting the rights of platform workers.

Digital vanguard

China has been making efforts to develop the platform economy and protect platform workers' rights and interests. With the world's largest population and a quarter of the global workforce, China stands at the forefront of technological innovation and globalization. Understanding the regulation of digital labor platforms in China will contribute toward better seeing the dynamic of these new forms of work and to supporting mutual learning between countries. A subsequent ILO report in June 2024 recognized China's leadership in organizing workers employed in the platform economy and said it will guide labor representatives in the European Union on developing social protection to vulnerable workers in the digital economy.

The meteoric expansion of the digital economy is unparalleled worldwide and has captured a large share of new workers in China. New generations of labor enter jobs due to demand for their work now and in the future. The initial stages of labor relations are typically fraught with controversy in all societies. Low pay and poor working conditions are often widespread, and workers respond to ameliorate their abysmal

Job seekers learn about labor protection policies for female employees at a women-only job fair in Lianyungang City, Jiangsu Province, on March 6

conditions. Most but not all Western scholars and NGOs deliberately neglect the ACFTU's seminal achievements and are engaging in sloppy and dishonest labor research seeking to disparage it. This notwithstanding, the ACFTU continues its indefatigable efforts that have been expanded under President Xi Jinping to recognize, address and change policy for workers in the new economy.

While the exceptional achievements of the ACFTU in organizing and protecting new economy workers have gone unnoticed by labor scholars in the West, they are recognized and highly regarded worldwide as an archetype of successful organizing. Western NGOs and labor researchers disregard or criticize the ACFTU's sustained success organizing new economy workers, and consider its improvement of wages and conditions an anomaly.

Perversion of Western NGOs

In spite of the ACFTU's remarkable success in organizing workers, Western NGOs and critics share a disdain for Chinese socialism, driven by a bourgeois ideology intent on subordinating labor to capital. But despite the fabrications, which are motivated by an aversion to socialism, recent surveys among workers reveal the ACFTU has rapidly responded as soon as poor working conditions, wage abuse, nonpayment of social security are reported in the private sector by rectifying the claims through mediation and arbitration courts. If the workers are unorganized, the ACFTU mobilizes them into unions to ensure employers comply with wage rates, safety standards and pensions. In contrast to Western advanced capitalist countries, where the capitalist class rules the economy, the Chinese working class is the leading mass social force.

As a result of the deepening of socialism with Chinese characteristics, tangible improvements have been achieved in workplaces throughout the nation. The ACFTU is committed to diligently responding to the changing material conditions that may alter labor wages and conditions and responding to challenges by private sector employers, inevitable in any state, but far less prevalent in China. As material conditions and labor relations transform, national labor law and local trade union practices have dramatically improved labor conditions in response to technological innovation. Consequently, the ACFTU encourages local democratic engagement in workplaces throughout industrial sectors, provinces and, on the local level through neighborhood, sub-district and district unions to increase wages and improve conditions, including providing social security to workers. In addition, digital and new economy employers must provide shelter to workers when temperatures rise. **BR**

The author is chair of the New York Peace Council, a professor of political science at Brooklyn College of the City University of New York in the United States, and editor in chief of the *Journal of Labor and Society*, a quarterly peer-reviewed social science publication founded in 1997
Copyedited by G.P. Wilson
Comments to dingying@cicgamericas.com

***Beijing Review*'s flagship podcast series**

The Governance Podcast

An inside take on the politics of the world's second largest economy

The Governance Podcast delves into topics related to President Xi Jinping's leadership and how the government functions in China. In this series, we explore the past, present and future of governance in China as it works toward meeting its development goals and finds its place in the global community.

Start listening on: YouTube

Center for the Americas,
China International Communications Group
中国外文局美洲传播中心（北京周报社）

BRIDGING THE PACIFIC

Pacific Dialogue
对话太平洋

Follow us on X @Pacific_Dialog
& on Douyin @对话太平洋

Our Power, Our Planet

By Lan Xinzhen

Earth Day is a reminder that our planet's systems today are more affected by human behaviors than by natural processes. April 22 was the 56th Earth Day and this year's theme, Our Power, Our Planet, stressed humanity's responsibility toward and impact on the Earth.

The Earth's ecosystems form an inseparable whole and only a future in which humans live in harmony with nature can be a truly prosperous one. Everyone has a responsibility to protect the Earth and each of us has a duty to contribute to its sustainable development.

On December 12, 2020, Chinese President Xi Jinping cited the ancient Chinese quote "the universe operates in silence, yet everything follows its course" while addressing the Climate Ambition Summit convened by the United Nations. In his speech, he stressed that the Earth is our one and only shared home. People should build on past achievements, work together to make steady progress in implementing the Paris Agreement (a pact reached by nearly 200 nations in 2015 to address climate change and its negative impacts—*Ed.*) and launch a new journey for global climate action.

The quote comes from *A Letter to Pei Kuan in Anzhou* by Li Bai (701-762), one of the greatest poets in Chinese history, and means that even though Heaven remains silent, the seasons still change, following its natural order. And though the Earth does not speak, all living things continue to thrive and multiply under its quiet guidance. It is a metaphor for the laws of nature—meaning that everything in the universe operates according to its own inherent principles, independent of human will.

As a responsible major country, China has consistently demonstrated its commitment with concrete actions. Through sustained afforestation efforts, it has become the world's largest contributor to artificial forest growth,

with model projects like the world's largest human-made forest in Saihanba, Hebei Province, contributing to this achievement. In 2024, China planted 4.45 million hectares of trees, raising the country's forest coverage to over 25 percent of its total land area, with total forest stock volume exceeding 20 billion cubic meters.

The nation has actively promoted wetland conservation and restoration, establishing more than 2,200 wetland nature reserves and greatly improving key wetland ecosystems. The Sanjiangyuan region, dubbed "the water tower of China," where the Yangtze, Yellow and Lancang rivers originate, has become a nationally representative and globally influential nature reserve system model.

Desertification control has also seen remarkable success. China's largest, and the world's second-largest, shifting sand desert, the Taklimakan, has been effectively contained, with its borders sealed and no longer expanding. The desert, known as the "Sea of Death," has been encircled with a sand-blocking green belt stretching 3,046 km.

And there are many more such examples.

The Chinese Government has guided society at large to embrace an approach to ecological civilization that respects nature, follows its ways and protects it. The government promotes green and low-carbon lifestyles and advocates for a new vision of green, open, circular and eco-friendly development.

The country has also applied a system of ecological conservation red lines to identify its crucial ecological zones and enforce strict protection in these areas. Furthermore, China has adhered to a holistic and systematic approach to conserving and improving mountain, water, forest, farmland, grassland and desert ecosystems. By following the Earth's ecological laws, it continues to help protect the planet and improve the environment.

The universe operates in silence, yet everything follows its course. In this vast universe, the Earth tells the greatest story of birth and growth in a silent way. Protecting the Earth and its ecosystems is more than a responsibility—it is a return to harmony with the very source of life. **BR**

Scan the QR code to watch the video

Copyedited by Elsbeth van Paridon
Comments to dingying@cicgamericas.com

The Magic Beans

By Liang Xiao

In China-U.S. trade relations, there is one commodity that cannot be overlooked: soybeans.

China is the world's largest importer of soybeans. With China already supporting nearly 20 percent of the global population, China's soybean imports increased from 293,900 tons in 1995 to 105 million tons in 2024, at a cost of around $52.7 billion, accounting for nearly 70 percent of its total grain import bill.

The U.S., meanwhile, is one of the world's leading soybean exporters. More than half of the soybeans grown in the U.S. are sold overseas, and for nearly two decades, China has been its largest foreign market. At their peak, U.S. soybeans made up nearly 40 percent of China's total soybean imports.

Soybeans are a prime example of the win-win cooperation between China and the U.S. within the framework of economic globalization. Many American farmers and agricultural businesses benefited from this heaven-made match.

The perfect trade pattern was broken in March 2018, as the Donald Trump administration launched the first round of its trade war with China, imposing tariffs on a wide range of Chinese goods. China swiftly retaliated, imposing equivalent tariffs on U.S. products. As a result, U.S. soybean exports were hit hard, losing nearly 10 percent of their market share in China. During Trump's first term, U.S. agriculture suffered losses exceeding $26 billion due to tariff policies, with the soybean industry accounting for nearly $20 billion.

In 2023, China's soybean purchases from the U.S. accounted for 51 percent of its total soybean imports, and in 2024, nearly 48 percent of U.S. soybean exports went to China. In that year, U.S. soybean exports to China were valued at $12.84 billion, maintaining a significant role in China-U.S. trade. Currently, however, China imports 70 percent of its soybeans from Brazil, more than three times the amount imported from the United States.

Ironically, these farmers facing bankruptcy have been some of the Republican Party's most important supporters

On the other hand, while China has reduced its soybean imports from the U.S., it has increased imports of meat and meat products, now worth $2.99 billion, and processed livestock feeds, valued at $1.29 billion. The U.S. is China's second largest source for both of these categories, which are closely related to soybeans.

With Trump's return in 2025, the U.S.-provoked trade war has escalated once again. At current tariff levels, U.S. soybeans no longer hold a price advantage in China and may even lose their entire market share. In fact, China had already made extensive preparations to deal with the full-scale escalation of the trade war seven years ago. *Oil World*, one of the most authoritative publications in the international oilseed and edible oil sector, recently pointed out that China's soybean imports from Brazil have already reached a historical high. The publication predicted China's soybean imports will continue to rise significantly in the second quarter to replenish its reduced reserves, caused by the sharp decline in U.S. soybean imports.

This is undoubtedly a huge boost for Brazilian soybean farmers. Brazil's soybean production is expected to reach a record 169 million tons this year, nearly enough to meet China's demand. However, the situation is different for U.S. soybean farmers. No other country, except China, can absorb such a large volume of soybeans.

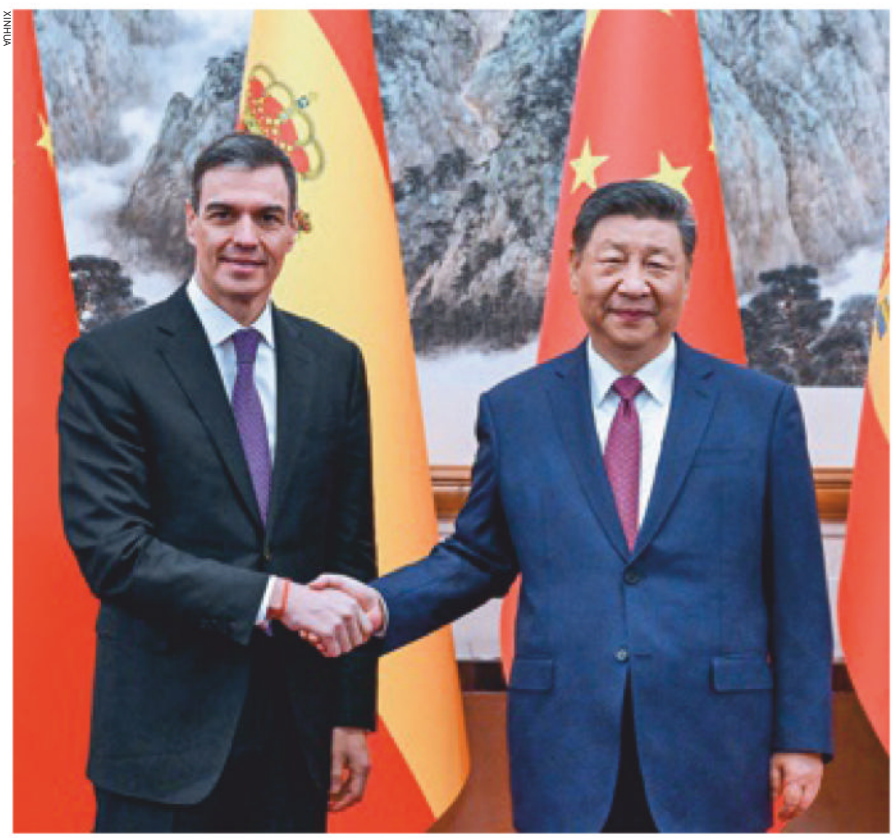
Many international media outlets have reported on the story of 38-year-old soybean farmer Caleb Ragland from Kentucky in the U.S., who also serves as president of the American Soybean Association, representing 500,000 growers. Ragland has publicly called on Trump to end the trade war. His farm is expected to lose $150,000 this year, relying heavily on loans to stay afloat, while his neighbors have started to go bankrupt and sell their land. The hard work of several generations could be wiped out by a single policy. Ironically, these farmers facing bankruptcy have been some of the Republican Party's most important supporters. Among the 10 states that produce the most soybeans, all but Illinois and Minnesota voted for Trump in the last election.

This soybean story could have had a better ending. With their deeply integrated supply chains and highly complementary economies, China and the U.S. stand to lose from any forced decoupling—an approach that is neither practical nor beneficial to either side. **BR**

Copyedited by G.P. Wilson
Comments to liangxiao@cicgamericas.com

Discarding Disfunction

By Cui Hongjian



XINHUA

Chinese President Xi Jinping meets with Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez in Beijing on April 11

Europe is experiencing a period of turmoil unseen since the end of the Cold War. The drastic changes in geopolitics, particularly a betrayal by a traditional ally and the consequent damages, are placing Europe in a position where its future is uncertain.

As Europe gradually recognizes that the world order is evolving toward multipolarity, it should re-evaluate its international environment, carefully reassess its former allies and redefine its partnerships under the principle of opposing unilateralism and upholding multilateralism. China, which has maintained a coherent and consistent policy toward Europe and has been an active advocate for multilateralism, can serve as a reliable partner for Europe in exploring new pathways for development.

Widening division

Trump's first presidency posed significant challenges for the Europe-U.S. consensus on rules. For this reason, Europe emphasized the importance of taking a rules-based approach to international affairs during the Joe Biden administration, attempting to reverse Trump's influence and stabilize the Europe-U.S. alliance.

However, after Trump resumed power, once more under the slogan of Make America Great Again, U.S. policies in the areas of politics, economy and security have been gradually undermining the so-called "rules-based order." Europe, which once attempted to uphold this order in coordination with the U.S., has been adversely impacted to the greatest extent.

Economically, Europe has not been spared from the unilateral tariffs imposed by the Trump administration, despite its status as America's economic ally and largest trading partner.

In terms of security, the Trump administration has not only abandoned its shared stance with Europe on Ukraine, but has also sidelined Europe—the most important stakeholder—in the process of responding to the conflict and sought to ease relations with Russia, regarded by Europe to be its greatest security threat. Furthermore, it has openly threatened to use force to seize the territories of some European nations and planned to abandon NATO, which is viewed by some European countries as a security guarantee.

Politically, the Trump administration's open and direct support for far-right European political parties has caused considerable harm to Europe, undermining the Europe-U.S. "alliance of shared values" and making the alliance exceedingly fragile in the face of Trump's America First policy.

What Europe finds most difficult to face and accept is that the various forms of coercion and harm brought by the U.S. are not merely temporary phenomena resulting from the Trump administration or the policy adjustments of the Republican Party. The fact that Trump garnered majority support from the American public for a return to power, coupled with the actions of the Biden administration that undermined the common rules of Europe and the U.S., indicates that as long as the U.S. is determined to maintain its hegemony, the so-called "rules-based order" is merely a guise for power politics. The ultimate aim is nothing short of political deception targeting Europe and an instrument to maintain the hegemonic order. Therefore, if Europe cannot

reflect on these developments and seek genuine strategic autonomy, it may become even more of a vassal and tool of the U.S. in its pursuit of hegemony.

A reliable partnership

As the only superpower in today's world, the U.S., implementing policies centered on its own narrow interests, is inflicting irreparable damage on the stability of the international order and the sustainability of the common interests of the world. Such policies pose a direct and long-term threat to China and Europe, which both benefit from the relative stability of the international community and the mutually beneficial global division of labor.

In the face of the Trump administration's forceful reshaping of transatlantic relations, Europe now stands at a historical crossroads with two paths ahead. One is to maintain the status quo, clinging to a decaying Western-centric order that, in practice, follows the leadership of the United States—ultimately making Europe a pawn in the new U.S. hegemonic scheme. The other is to forge ahead toward the goal of achieving strategic autonomy and integrated development, so as to become a major constructive force in a new multipolar world.

Europe has already demonstrated strong determination and courage to reduce its dependence on the United States and to increase strategic autonomy through a series of moves, including political actions that oppose American unilateralism, counter-tariff measures and the "rearmament" plan to strengthen regional security. However, to transform the mentality of the traditional Euro-American alliance, Europe must embrace a fair, open and inclusive world. It is critical for Europe to seek sincere and trustworthy partners who treat each other as equals and endorse a principle-based, responsible and efficiency-driven multilateralist approach.

This year is the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and the EU. Over the past five decades, sustained cooperation has created a strong bond of shared interests between China and Europe and such a bond cannot be easily severed by protectionism. This tie forms a solid foundation for both sides to build consensus, coordinate positions and act together in the midst of current global transformations. In response to the U.S. abuse of tariffs and protectionist measures, China and Europe are defending their common interests through actions, such as voicing opposition, resuming negotiations on electric vehicles and exploring new areas of cooperation.

Although the U.S. remains an important trading partner for both China and Europe, it is not the only option. As long as China and Europe maintain communication and coordination in economic and trade policies and open sectors, such as manufacturing, new energy and services, to each other, they can thrive in the global market. This not only allows them to meet challenges from the U.S. but also opens up new space for profit growth.

Continuous dialogue over the past five decades has helped establish a strong consensus between China and Europe on multilateralism—one that is resilient against Cold War mentality and bloc confrontation. This consensus provides a source of confidence for the two sides to manage geopolitical tensions, promote regional peace and development and build strategic mutual trust.

China's stance on regional conflicts, such as the Russia-Ukraine crisis and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, as well as on key European concerns like the refugee issue and climate change, has been fair, just, open and consistent. This stands in sharp contrast to the self-serving, flip-flopping and blame-shifting U.S. approach. As the U.S. seeks to dictate the process of political settlement for these crises, China welcomes any problem-solving effort but emphasizes the importance of fair, transparent procedures and the legitimacy and sustainability of outcomes. China views it as unfair that Europe is excluded from U.S.-led political talks over the Ukraine crisis and supports Europe's involvement and leadership in the political resolution of this matter.

Although different historical experiences and current situations may result in divergent views on geopolitics and regional conflicts between China and Europe, this does not prevent them from taking on greater shared responsibilities—based on the UN Charter and principles of international law—in ending conflicts and restoring peace. Through these efforts, strategic trust can be established, despite ideological differences, to maintain regional strategic balance and contribute to global strategic stability.

Over the past five decades, experience in deepening cooperation and managing competition has created a remarkably resilient and close China-Europe relationship that will not be undermined by global turmoil. This can serve as a strong driving force for the two sides to seek development through openness, pursue stability through reform and break new ground in an evolving international landscape.

China is committed to deepening reform and opening up and seeks to strike a rational balance between pursuing development and ensuring security. Meanwhile, Europe is trying to establish "open strategic autonomy," aiming to enhance its external security environment while sustaining economic growth and political stability. The similarities in goals and strategies can provide China and Europe with momentum for enhanced cooperation. This would ensure that both sides could continue to benefit from each other's development and would offer models of effective cooperation and viable solutions for other countries in a world of uncertainty and turbulence. **BR**

The author is a professor at the Academy of Regional and Global Governance and director of the Center for EU and Regional Development Studies at Beijing Foreign Studies University. This is an edited excerpt of his article recently published in *China Today*
Copyedited by G.P. Wilson
Comments to dingying@cicgamericas.com

Anti-Fascist War Victory Remains Significant

By Lan Xinzhen

This year is the 80th anniversary of the victory of the World Anti-Fascist War, and China, Russia and other countries have scheduled grand commemorative events. The aim of these activities is not to perpetuate hatred, but to remind people to learn from history and avoid repeating the mistakes of the past; it is to call on people to honor all those who laid down their lives and to cherish peace; it is all the more to oppose any attempt to falsify history, deny crimes of aggression and undermine peaceful development.

For China, commemorating the victory of the World Anti-Fascist War can strengthen international cooperation in upholding the multilateral trading system, promoting economic globalization and safeguarding world peace and development. Additionally, it serves as a vehicle for carrying forward the spirit of struggle against injustice and inspiring people's sense of pride and cohesion, thereby advancing Chinese modernization.

The World Anti-Fascist War first broke out in China with the September 18 Incident in 1931, in which the Japanese forces stationed in northeast China under an unequal treaty attacked Shenyang, Liaoning Province. By February 1932, the Japanese had occupied all the three provinces in northeast China. The Chinese people then waged a 14-year arduous war of resistance, suffering more than 35 million casualties and making a huge national sacrifice for the victory of the World Anti-Fascist War. The Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression was an important part of the World Anti-Fascist War and the Chinese battlefield was its main eastern theater.

Whenever World War II (WWII) is discussed, the international community talks more about battles in Europe and Pacific such as the Normandy Landings, the Battle of Britain, the Dunkirk evacuation and the Pearl Harbor attack.

The German invasion of Poland is widely recognized as the official start of WWII. But the July 7 Incident in 1937, also known as the Marco Polo Bridge Incident, in which Japanese forces attacked Chinese soldiers at the Lugou Bridge, or the Marco Polo Bridge, in the suburbs of Beijing, marked the start of Japan's full-scale war of aggression against China, and in fact also marked the beginning of WWII.

The activities commemorating the 80th anniversary of the victory of the World Anti-Fascist War will provide a platform for exchange and cooperation among countries

By commemorating the 80th anniversary of the victory of the Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression and the World Anti-Fascist War, China will encourage its people to learn from this historical lesson, cherish peace and demonstrate the determination to adhere to the path of peaceful development. China has always been committed to maintaining world peace and promoting the building of a community with a shared future for humanity.

WWII completely reshaped the international political landscape and accelerated the collapse of the global colonial system. The post-war collective rise of China and other developing countries has become an important force in opposing hegemonism and power politics and promoting the establishment of a fair and equitable international political and economic order. The activities commemorating the 80th anniversary of the victory of the World Anti-Fascist War will provide a platform for exchange and cooperation among countries, which is conducive to promoting multilateral cooperation and jointly addressing global challenges.

The War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression was the first national liberation struggle in modern times in which China won a complete victory over foreign aggressors. Countless heroes defended the sovereignty of the country and the dignity of the Chinese nation with their lives. Through commemorative activities, China can further strengthen the study, dissemination and passing on of war history, honor all those who laid down their lives, cherish peace and oppose any attempt to tamper with history, whitewash crimes of aggression and undermine peaceful development, and at the same time unite efforts in pursuit of Chinese modernization and the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. **BR**

Copyedited by G.P. Wilson
Comments to lanxinzhen@cicgamericas.com

Nurturing Tomorrow's Innovators

By Matteo Giovannini

Starting September 1, primary and secondary schools in Beijing will incorporate at least eight hours of AI education per academic year, according to an announcement from the Beijing Municipal Education Commission in March. The move emphasizes China's push to dominate the AI sector by nurturing homegrown talent early.

This initiative is about more than coding or robotics. China has long recognized AI as a core driver of economic transformation and the curriculum aims to cultivate a generation comfortable with AI-driven problem-solving, equipped to thrive in an innovation-driven digital economy.

The country's New Generation AI Development Plan, unveiled in 2017, set an ambitious target for China to become the world's leading AI powerhouse by 2030. While much of the global hi-tech race has fixated on research breakthroughs, infrastructure development and industrial applications, China is playing the long game: If you want to lead in AI tomorrow, you have to teach it in classrooms today.

One of the main challenges facing the global AI industry today is, in fact, a shortage of skilled professionals. The demand for AI talent far outstrips supply, with companies and research institutions competing fiercely for top minds. China, despite its rapid progress in AI, has acknowledged the need to cultivate a deeper bench of experts to sustain long-term growth. By integrating AI into school curricula now, China ensures its workforce won't just keep up—it could set the pace.

Educational reform in China has historically been responsive to economic needs. The country's rapid rise as a manufacturing and technology hub was supported by a deliberate emphasis on STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) education. AI is becoming the next frontier and its inclusion in early education marks a natural evolution of China's skills development strategy. Beyond just technical training, the introduction of AI courses also fosters critical thinking and ethical considerations, preparing students not just to use the technology, but to shape its future development responsibly.

As China produces a new generation of AI-literate individuals, opportunities for international cooperation in research, development and policymaking could expand

China's AI education push offers valuable lessons for other countries that are grappling with how to prepare their youth for an AI-driven future.

While many nations have recognized AI's importance, efforts to integrate it into education remain fragmented. The challenge lies in developing comprehensive curricula that go beyond basic coding skills to include AI ethics, machine learning principles and real-world applications. China's structured approach, with government backing and integration into the national education system, offers a model that other countries can learn from and adapt to their own needs.

Furthermore, this initiative might have implications for global AI collaboration. As China produces a new generation of AI-literate individuals, opportunities for international cooperation in research, development and policymaking could expand. At the same time, it may also intensify competition, as countries seek to develop their own talent pipelines to keep pace with China's rapidly growing AI ecosystem.

By investing in AI literacy from an early age, China is positioning itself to lead in a field that will define the coming decades. In the digital age, national strength will be determined not just by physical resources or industrial output, but by the ability to cultivate and harness human intelligence.

As AI continues to evolve, nations that prioritize education and talent development will be best positioned to shape the future. China's approach serves as a powerful reminder that preparing for an AI-driven world begins in the classroom.

The rest of the world would do well to take note. **BR**

The author is a finance professional at Industrial and Commercial Bank of China and a non-resident associate fellow at the Beijing-based think tank Center for China and Globalization
Copyedited by Elsbeth van Paridon
Comments to dingying@cicgamericas.com

BEIJING REVIEW IS NOW AVAILABLE IN FACTIVA

Beijing Review **is now available as a source in Factiva, a leading, global collection of licensed news, Web content, and company data. Factiva has 32,000 sources from nearly every country worldwide, in 28 languages, and is owned by Dow Jones.**

CICG Center for Americas
中国外文局美洲传播中心（北京周报社）

左权

DISCOVER ZUOQUAN

A summer resort in the Taihang Mountains

A revolutionary tradition

A thriving economy

A view of Zuoquan Lake

Principles for Progress

The CPC unveils the formula behind Chongqing's path to modernization

By Ma Xiaowen

Chongqing, once synonymous with difficult terrain, heavy industry and a glaring urban-rural divide, has now transformed into a vibrant modern metropolis, attracting widespread attention.

This April, over 200 political leaders from more than 50 nations gathered at this dynamic southwestern metropolis, alongside foreign diplomatic envoys, think tank experts, media representatives and business leaders. Their mission was to decipher the municipality's remarkable journey toward modernization.

They shared their ideas at an event held in Chongqing from April 20 to 22. The event, Stories of the Communist Party of China (CPC)—Achievements of Chongqing in Practicing Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era, was hosted by the International Department of the CPC Central Committee (IDCPC), together with the CPC Chongqing Municipal Committee.

Sun Haiyan, Vice Minister of the IDCPC, said at the event that the development of Chongqing offers insight into China's sweeping modernization drive.

The municipality puts emphasis on empowering industries with digital intelligence and promoting high-quality development, international cooperation, reform, modern governance, urban-rural integration and rural revitalization, and ecological protection, said Yuan Jiajun, a member of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee and Secretary of the CPC Chongqing Municipal Committee.

The results of the city's efforts speak for themselves. In 2024, Chongqing's GDP reached 3.22 trillion yuan ($495.4 billion), a robust 5.7-percent increase year on year. In the same year, the value added of Chongqing's large-scale industries surged by 7.3 percent, and the city's per-capita GDP surpassed 100,000 yuan ($15,385), Yuan announced.

A human dimension

The event also featured a compelling story-sharing session, where ordinary people from diverse sectors of Chongqing offered firsthand accounts of the city's socioeconomic progress and the evolving fabric of daily life.

Lu Sixiang, a train driver from Chongqing Locomotive Depot, vividly recounted the city's remarkable transformation from a geographically constrained inland city to an opening-up frontier, catalyzed by the launch of the China-Europe freight train service and the New International Land-Sea Trade Corridor. Sharing his personal journey from witnessing his mentor drive the inaugural China-Europe train to becoming the first driver of the Land-Sea Trade Corridor train, Lu highlighted the expanding freight routes, diversified cargo, and burgeoning transport hubs that now define Chongqing's connectivity. He is now dedicated to passing on his invaluable skills to the next generation.

Xu Long, a traffic police officer, and Chen Li, a community worker, illustrated the transformative impact of Digital Chongqing initiatives on their respective fields. Xu's intelligent traffic management system has effectively eased congestion in previously notorious bottlenecks like Linjiangmen, while Chen's digital toolkit, encompassing an integrated app and real-time monitoring, empowers her to better serve residents and respond efficiently to emergencies. Their experiences collectively demonstrated how digital technology is making Chongqing's urban governance smarter, more efficient, and ultimately enhancing the safety and wellbeing of its residents.

Pan Xiaojiang, Secretary of the CPC Committee of Erdu Village, Fuling District, and head of the Villagers' Committee of Erdu, shared the inspiring story of Fuling's metamorphosis from poverty to prosperity, driven by the flourishing pickled mustard tuber industry. Leveraging strategic policy support, the introduction of new crop varieties, and comprehensive industrial chain integration, Fuling has not only revitalized

its agricultural sector but also spurred rural tourism, enabling villagers to enjoy a prosperous life and inviting visitors to experience the unique charm of the region.

Wu Chengli, Secretary of the CPC Committee of Minzhucun Community, Jiulongpo District, and head of the Residents Committee of Minzhucun Community, unveiled the three key pillars behind her community's successful urban renewal: active resident participation, a focus on resolving pressing livelihood issues, and the preservation of collective memory.

Minzhucun, a sprawling residential area built in the 1950s for Chongqing Construction Factory workers, had fallen into disrepair. Through a people-centric urban renewal initiative, it has been transformed into a trendy Chongqing hotspot, characterized by renovated red-brick houses and repurposed factory buildings. "Prioritizing people's wellbeing is the very essence of Chinese modernization in Chongqing," Wu concluded.

Shared vision

Prior to the event, over 200 political leaders and foreign diplomats embarked on tours across Chongqing, gaining firsthand insights into the city's multifaceted development.

The event also included the China-Foreign Political Parties Dialogue, the launch of a youth exchange program titled Read the World Through Pages and Miles and the Chongqing Economic and Trade Promotion Event.

During the economic and trade promotion session, representatives from over 20 countries and regions engaged in fruitful investment and trade discussions with entities including Chongqing Liangjiang New Area, Chongqing Hi-Tech Industrial Development Zone, Jiulongpo District, Yongchuan District and prominent companies. The event yielded 16 significant cooperation outcomes, with participating parties committed to furthering in-depth negotiations to advance these collaborative endeavors in the next phase.

Chinese and international attendees contributed valuable insights and recommendations for Chongqing's future trajectory.

John Ross, a senior fellow at the Chongyang Institute for Financial Studies at Renmin University of China, drew a comparison between Chongqing and London, emphasizing Chongqing's unique position as a confluence of ancient and modern China and a significant manufacturing center. He suggested strategies for its continued development, including enhancing tourism as a holistic "visitor experience," leveraging the city's universities to boost productivity, promoting greater internationalization by attracting foreign talent, and strengthening external publicity based on a clear and compelling strategic positioning.

Victor Cadena, Executive President of the Mexican Chamber of Commerce in China, following his two-day tour, identified the automobile industry as a cornerstone of Chongqing's economy. He expressed his hope for increased collaboration between auto parts companies in Chongqing and Mexico, noting the existing successful Mexican motorcycle business in Chongqing that exports over 6,000 units to Mexico annually.

MA XIAOWEN

Wu Chengli, Secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Minzhucun Community Committee, Jiulongpo District, Chongqing Municipality, and head of the Residents Committee of Minzhucun Community, shares the story of her community's renewal with the attendees of an event, titled Stories of the CPC—Achievements of Chongqing in Practicing Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era, in Chongqing on April 21

Addressing recent U.S. tariff concerns, Cadena affirmed the chamber's unwavering commitment to the Chinese market, emphasizing the inseparable link between the Mexican supply chain and Chinese investment, particularly in crucial materials like steel and aluminum, as well as processing machinery.

Ernest Dube, Deputy Principal of the Chitepo School of Ideology in Zimbabwe, conveyed his country's admiration for the China-proposed Belt and Road Initiative, which aims to boost connectivity along and beyond the ancient Silk Road routes, viewing it as a major opportunity to connect Zimbabwe with the Chinese economy.

B.R. Deepak, a professor at the Center for Chinese and Southeast Asian Studies of Jawaharlal Nehru University, India, highlighted the significance of Chinese modernization as the modernization of such a large population, praising China's ability to balance development and environmental protection—a valuable lesson for India. He also acknowledged China's success in integrating supply chains and promoting the innovation and widespread adoption of technological advancements.

Liu Jianchao, Minister of the IDCPC, said, "Chinese modernization has not only fundamentally reshaped China but has also increasingly benefited its neighboring countries and the wider global community."

Addressing current global challenges, Liu noted the rise of unilateralism and protectionism cast a shadow of uncertainty over the world economy. "China will dedicate its full efforts to advancing Chinese modernization, transforming its vast domestic market into new advantages and powerful drivers of growth," he said. "We are confident in our ability to achieve projected development goals, thereby injecting much-needed stability into the world through the certainty of China's progress. China will consistently pursue high-level opening up and resolutely deepen mutually beneficial cooperation with all nations, working collaboratively toward shared prosperity." **BR**

Copyedited by G.P. Wilson
Comments to maoxiaowen@cicgamericas.com

Echoes Over Quzhou

A China-U.S. people-to-people bond forged in war, reaffirmed in peace

By Zhao Wei

"We were given their finest accommodations since we were the Americans who had just bombed Japan. The extra clothing was like cardboard but it was thick and warm. The beds were way too small, but they were a welcome sight to us."

These words were penned in a 1942 diary entry by Charles Ross Greening, an American pilot and one of the famed Doolittle Raiders. Later published in his memoir *Not as Briefed*, Greening's account describes his experience in Quzhou, a city nestled in the western part of China's Zhejiang Province.

On April 18, 1942, in direct response to the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, the United States launched the mission Doolittle Raid. Led by Lieutenant Colonel James Doolittle, 80 airmen took to the skies in B-25 bombers to strike Tokyo and other key Japanese cities. Among the pilots was Greening. However, due to unforeseen circumstances, the crews failed to land at Quzhou Airport as planned after running out of fuel.

Most were forced to crash-land or parachute out over unfamiliar terrain. Except for one aircraft that reached the Soviet Union and two captured in Japanese-occupied zones, the crews of 13 planes were rescued, at great risk, by Chinese soldiers and civilians. One airman died, but 64 survived, including 51 who were eventually reunited in Quzhou. Their rescue came at a tragic cost: Japanese forces retaliated viciously, killing an estimated 250,000 Chinese civilians in the aftermath.

Now, 83 years later, Quzhou has once again become a symbol of unity and resilience. On April 18, in commemoration of both the Doolittle Raid and the 80th anniversary of the victory of the Chinese People's War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression (1931-45) and the World Anti-Facist War, the city hosted a China-U.S. people-to-people exchange event. The participants paid tribute to a bond born of wartime sacrifice and enduring mutual respect.

See you in Quzhou

In 2019, Roland Emmerich's war epic *Midway* premiered simultaneously in the U.S. and China. In one scene, Doolittle rallies his men before their parachute jump: "I don't know whether this is the territory of China or Japan. Be careful. See you in Quzhou." The line echoes far beyond the silver screen; it evokes a real-life promise born in the skies and kept alive through decades of remembrance.

The promise took on renewed meaning in the early 1990s. Brian Moon, a close friend of Doolittle's and then Vice President of Northwest Airlines, organized a series of visits between those connected to the Doolittle Raid, both Chinese and American, rekindling the wartime bond that had united the two peoples. In March 1993, Moon led a delegation to Quzhou, where they presented a special gift to the city: a commemorative plaque inscribed with the Chinese characters for "thank you," surrounded by the signatures of 44 surviving Doolittle Raiders.

From that moment on, "See you in Quzhou" evolved from a wartime farewell into a symbol of enduring friendship. Over the years, some descendants of the Raiders have returned to Quzhou to honor those who had once risked everything to save their fathers. In turn, Chinese civilians who took part in the rescue efforts have been invited to commemorative events in the U.S., ensuring that the legacy of solidarity forged in war continues to bridge nations in peace.

A deeply moving moment unfolded in 2024. During the 1942 raid, Charles Ozuk, navigator of Bomber No.3, parachuted into Jiangshan, a district of Quzhou, where his chute snagged and left him stranded overnight on a steep cliff. The next morning, he was discovered by a local villager, Liao Shiyuan, who brought the injured airman into his home and nursed him back to health. After five days of care and recovery, Ozuk was able to rejoin his unit.

In 2018, in a gesture of gratitude, Ozuk's daughter, Susan Ozuk, donated $15,000 to renovate the old house where her father had once found refuge. On April 18, 2024, during a commemorative event in Quzhou, Liao's son, Liao Mingfa, handed the keys to the restored home to Susan and said with heartfelt sincerity, "My home is your home; you are always welcome." Susan, in turn, invited the Liao family to visit her home in the U.S. and the two families pledged to stay in touch.

The story of Charles Ozuk and Liao Shiyuan was not only remembered by the families involved, it became a symbol of the lasting impact of people-to-people connections. At the recent exchange event in Quzhou, Gao Anming, Editor in Chief of China International Communications Group, recalled their story in his opening address.

"This is not merely a commemorative gathering," Gao said. "It is a pro-

COURTESY PHOTO

Representatives from the USS Hornet Museum and the Quzhou Doolittle Raid Historical Research Association exchange items related to the Doolittle Raid and subsequent rescue at a China-U.S. people-to-people friendship exchange event in Quzhou, Zhejiang Province, on April 18

found dialogue that bears the weight of history while inspiring hope for the future. It offers practical insights for our times."

"Looking to the present, we must use diverse forms of dialogue to confront shared challenges. The space for cooperation among civil societies is vast. These exchanges have promoted the sharing of information and the flow of ideas, breathing new life into the friendly interactions between our peoples. Such efforts are a vital force for deepening collaboration at multiple levels and tackling global issues together," he added.

Illuminating the future

Among the many heartfelt moments at the exchange event, the Letter to the Future ceremony stood out as a poignant symbol of hope and continuity. Chinese and American participants gathered in unity to place handwritten letters into a ceremonial postbox, messages crafted with care and addressed to generations yet to come. Their words carried a common aspiration: Peace, mutual understanding and the friendships forged in war will continue to grow in times of peace.

Among those participating were Jeffrey Greene, Chairman of the Sino-American Aviation Heritage Foundation; George Retelas, representative of the USS Hornet Museum; and Wang Hanlong, Vice President of the Quzhou Doolittle Raid Historical Research Association (QDRHRA), an organization composed of civilian researchers and volunteers dedicated to preserving this vital history. Youth representatives from Quzhou joined them, representing the new generation tasked with carrying the torch forward.

Greene read touching letters from two American veterans who served in the China theater during WWII. Both over a century old, Harry Moyer and Robert Moore sent words of remembrance and deep friendship toward China.

"The courage of the crews of the B-25 bombers was matched by the bravery of the Chinese people who helped them avoid capture when crash-landing in China. America will forever be in debt to China for the sacrifices made 83 years ago," wrote Moyer, now 105. "May we continue to remember our joint history and appreciate the closer relationships in the future."

The ceremony also reflected a meaningful passing of the baton to the next generation. Retelas presented the QDRHRA with a rare piece of history: a roll of original 16mm film documenting the training of the Doolittle Raiders before their mission. In return, the Quzhou association offered a gift to the USS Hornet Aircraft Carrier Museum, a fragment of wreckage from B-25 bomber No.9, recovered from the site of its crash in Quzhou.

"This aircraft fragment will take its place aboard our museum ship, where it will become the centerpiece of our Doolittle Raiders exhibit," said Retelas. "It's not just a relic, but a powerful symbol of shared sacrifice during WWII, a story of courage, compassion and collaboration. May it inspire every visitor who walks through our doors and honor the bravery of the Doolittle Raiders and the courageous compassion of our Chinese allies who helped bring them home."

The exchange event served as a reminder that in times of darkness, people from distant lands stood shoulder to shoulder, crossing mountains and oceans to support one another. In a video message, Zhang Jianmin, Consul General of the Chinese Consulate General in San Francisco, the U.S., captured the spirit of the day: "May the people of China and the U.S. carry forward this friendship that transcends time and space, replace confrontation with cooperation, resolve differences through inclusiveness, and jointly safeguard the hard-won good life." **BR**

Copyedited by Elsbeth van Paridon
Comments to zhaowei@cicgamericas.com

Teaching Beyond Limits

Special education and rehabilitation rewrite futures for children in China

By Zhang Yage

"Most people can climb the stairs to enter society on their own, whereas some people cannot because of a disability. We are obliged to build ladders for those who need a helping hand." This is the guiding principle of Zhang Huanxia, head of the Chenguang Cerebral Palsy Rehabilitation Service Center in Chaoyang District, Beijing.

Having been committed to rehabilitation services for children with disabilities for over 20 years, Zhang has witnessed the rapid development of the field and is now looking at a brighter future for these children with extra help from society and government. She refers to her work as "a career that can change people's destinies."

"Children receiving special education often require more time and energy from us compared with regular children. We're not just helping them recover from their conditions on a medical level and giving them the school courses—we're teaching them how to perceive life and the world at large, preparing them for future education and social integration," Zhang told *Beijing Review*. "I spend long hours with these children every day, and they are like my own. I believe most special education teachers also feel this way."

Special treatment

Special education refers to personalized educational services designed for individuals with physical, mental or learning disabilities. It provides equitable developmental opportunities through adapted curricula, specialized instructors and assistive technologies. Its target group includes children with visual and hearing impairments, speech and language disorders, intellectual disabilities, physical disabilities, as well as mental and learning disabilities.

According to statistics from the China Disabled Persons' Federation (CDPF) , as of 2022, China had 1.2 million children aged 0-15 with certified disabilities. If we include uncertified numbers, who have only mild symptoms but do require special education services throughout their nine-year compulsory education, estimates suggest the total number is much larger.

"In the 1990s, most rehabilitation centers were general facilities serving a large variety of disabled children with diverse needs," Zhang said. "After the year 2000, specialized centers that focus on only one or two types of disabilities began emerging across the country. China's special education system is becoming increasingly standardized and professionalized. Additionally, modern rehabilitation centers now integrate three core functions: education, therapy and medical care under one roof. This system allows students to access the whole package in one institution."

Zhang's institution, which provides rehabilitation and education exclusively for children with cerebral palsy (CP), was established in 2009 with support from Chaoyang District authorities.

"Since our founding, the Beijing Municipal Government has provided us with a monthly subsidy of 3,600 yuan ($492) for each student," Zhang said. "This helps alleviate costs for children from disadvantaged families. With subsidies, parents only pay 120 yuan ($16.4) for a half-day program, which suffices for children with CP."

Government support aside, Chenguang receives over a dozen donations annually from local communities and businesses. These include daily necessities, rehabilitation equipment and human resources, including voluntary hours, lectures and courses.

With over 15 years specializing in CP treatment, Zhang has worked with more than 1,000 children. Most of them suffered from mobility and cognitive impairments caused by CP—particularly gait dysfunction. Therefore, teaching these children to walk normally remains a great challenge for Zhang and her staff.

"I don't think there are many fundamental differences between children with CP and their peers," Zhang said. "Their cognitive abilities, perception and communication skills match those within their age group—they simply face mobility challenges. Our core mission is helping them to walk independently through physical rehabilitation."

"While some children progress rapidly within a month, the average rehabilitation period spans one to two years," she added. One standout case is a boy from Hebei Province who began to walk independently after just three months of therapy.

COURTESY PHOTO

Children hold up their paintings at the Chenguang Cerebral Palsy Rehabilitation Service Center in Beijing's Chaoyang District on November 29, 2024

COURTESY PHOTO

Volunteers from art studios offer an art session for children at the Chenguang Cerebral Palsy Rehabilitation Service Center in Beijing's Chaoyang District on February 21

"He transitioned seamlessly back to school, where he's thriving with a full teenage life—study, friends and activities. This is our biggest reward," Zhang said.

Continued progress

Zhang observes that growing public awareness campaigns and disability education have significantly improved social acceptance of special needs communities. "A decade ago, when I took our children to local supermarkets or parks—vital training for both mobility and social cognition—they'd attract stares or even teasing from children who didn't know why they walk the way they walk," Zhang recalled. "That rarely happens now."

Chenguang also actively promotes public awareness on special education through original performances and exhibitions, starred in and hosted by its staff and students. "These initiatives help other children understand their peers with disabilities, reducing future risks of bullying and discrimination. For the children themselves, it builds self-esteem that in turn supports their rehabilitation," Zhang explained.

After receiving training at rehabilitation centers, some children can afford to enroll in full-time special education schools, but the majority of children with disabilities in China now choose to attend mainstream classes in regular schools. This poses a new challenge: These schools often lack trained special education teachers and sensory integration equipment, which means that the children still need further support from society and government alike.

China is committed to boosting the popularization and long-term development of special education. According to Global Education Monitoring Report released by UNESCO in 2023, the country allocated 6,000 yuan ($817) annually for each student in the compulsory-stage special education schools—triple the funding for regular schools—while constructing 12,000 specialized resource classrooms between 2020 and 2023 to cover 70 percent of county-level districts.

Beyond developed educational hubs like Beijing, particular attention also goes to ensuring enrollment in remote, economically disadvantaged regions, demonstrating a commitment to equitable access to education across China's diverse geographic and socioeconomic landscape. In January 2022, an action plan on special education released by the State Council set the goal to raise the enrollment rate of school-age children with disabilities in compulsory education to 97 percent and the annual subsidy for each student to 7,000 yuan ($958) by 2025.

A compelling example is the increased enrollment rate of Leishan County Minzu Special Education School in Qiandongnan Miao and Dong Autonomous Prefecture, Guizhou Province in southwest China. The local government has pioneered an innovative "1+N" classroom model—where one county-level special education school broadcasts lessons via livestreaming platforms to multiple township schools that do not have special education teachers. Special education teachers can coach remotely while local classroom teachers provide in-person support to students with disabilities.

This breakthrough system ensures children with disabilities in remote mountainous areas, especially those whose families cannot facilitate county school attendance, can have access to special education. Since implementing this model, Qiandongnan has seen its enrollment rate for children with disabilities surge from 76 percent in 2018 to 94 percent in 2023.

"After receiving rehabilitation training and special education, children with disabilities can achieve the same academic performance and career opportunities as their peers—and it is our responsibility to ensure they have access to these opportunities," Zhang said. "When I look at these children, I see limitless potential in their future. Supporting them is not just a moral obligation for a country and society—it is a commitment to social equity."

Zhang added, "I hope that in the next two decades of my career, I will witness continued progress in this field—through advancements in technology, professional training for human capital, public engagement and policy development—as I have in the first two decades." **BR**

Copyedited by Elsbeth van Paridon
Comments to zhangyage@cicgamericas.com

Just the Way You Are

How support for people with autism in China is evolving By Lu Yan

At the age of 5, Sun Chi was diagnosed with autism. From that moment, he and his family began a long journey of rehabilitation and intervention. His mother often reflects on the challenges they faced and how supportive the community in Shenzhen, Guangdong Province, has been.

Over the years, they have received help from many caring individuals and organizations, making a great difference in their lives. As society's awareness of people with autism has grown, related policies have also improved, providing more resources and opportunities for families like theirs.

Now, at 23, Sun has made remarkable progress. He can discuss work with his colleagues, dine out on his own and even take bus trips on weekends. His journey is a testament to resilience and the power of community support.

Autism, also known as autism spectrum disorder, is characterized by repetitive, restricted and inflexible patterns of behavior, interests and activities, as well as difficulties in social interaction and social communication. According to the 2023 report on persons with disabilities released by the China Disabled Persons' Federation, the country has over 13 million individuals with autism, with an annual increase of nearly 200,000.

In 1982, China diagnosed its first case of autism, marking the beginning of a journey that has spanned 43 years. Over these decades, understanding of autism has gradually increased, and policies for people with autism have become more comprehensive.

However, as individuals with autism transition into adulthood and face middle age and beyond, new challenges arise. Key questions emerge: Can they find employment? Once their parents grow older, who will ensure their wellbeing and support their daily lives? These issues highlight the need for continued advocacy and resources to secure a stable future for adults with autism.

A working progress

Sun's first job experience came during his senior year of high school when he participated in a three-month internship at a car wash. His mother had a clear vision: The most important goals for children with autism are learning to live independently and obeying social rules, laying a foundation for their future. These skills, she believed, are far more valuable and practical than gaining admission to any prestigious university.

During his time at the car wash, Sun learned many essential social skills and workplace etiquette. While some people sympathized with his hard work, his mother never felt sorry for him. "If such a valuable opportunity for him to grow were to be taken away, that would be harmful. For him, working is a victory," she told local newspaper *Nanfang Metropolis Daily*.

Her decision proved to be the right one. Later, when she saw that Dami and Xiaomi, an organization that provides rehabilitation and support for children with developmental disorders, including autism, were recruiting capable individuals with autism, she encouraged Sun to apply. Initially, he would only handle administrative tasks, but he has since been promoted to a position in the headquarters, where he is involved in more and different undertakings, including video editing. This March was Sun's second anniversary at the organization.

Among those with autism, 50 percent are classified as having mild autism, with basically normal language and intellectual abilities. Additionally, 35 percent of children have classic autism, which is characterized by early delays in language

XINHUA

Students with intellectual disabilities, including autism, from a special education school play with a bubble machine, accompanied by friends and family, in a park in Beibei District, Chongqing Municipality, on March 15, 2024

and intelligence; however, with scientific intervention, they have a chance to improve and meet the criteria for mild autism.

Not all children with autism are like Sun who can enter the workforce as adults. Due to varying degrees of symptoms, some individuals with moderate to severe autism have to depend on care from their parents or others throughout their lives.

Xiao Qi, now 28, was diagnosed with autism at the age of 3. His case is particularly unique as he has regressive autism, meaning he continuously forgets skills he has previously learned. Between the ages of 18 and 24, the situation became especially precarious. His mother, Pan Xiufen, lived in constant distress, saying, "After finally teaching him to do laundry and manage some tasks, he suddenly forgets everything." Given these circumstances, it's very difficult for Xiao to find a suitable care institution.

For a long time, Pan could only keep Xiao by her side, taking care of his every need. As Xiao's condition gradually improved, she began looking for temporary care facilities. Over the past two years, she has occasionally taken her son to a rehabilitation service center in Shenzhen's Luohu District for "respite services."

These "respite services" allow parents to leave their children with autism at a care facility for a few hours to a day, giving them a much-needed break from the demanding responsibilities of caregiving and the opportunity to focus on their own needs.

Doing more

The Blue Book on the Needs of Autism Families in China, published by Huaxia Publishing House in 2016, revealed that the employment rate for adults with autism in China was less than 10 percent at the time. Over half of the parents (55.5 percent) lacked confidence in their children's future employment opportunities, and 69.3 percent believed that employment training for older individuals with autism was not given adequate attention. Furthermore, 72.7 percent of parents were worried about their children's future after they were no longer around.

Today, this situation has changed. In October 2023, Shenzhen released the Implementation Plan for Comprehensive Support Services for Autism, which outlines a commitment to providing comprehensive support for individuals with autism in areas such as policy, rehabilitation, education, employment, family support and social integration. This includes initiatives to promote employment for people with autism, explore community-based care models, establish public rehabilitation centers, and create respite spaces in public areas to reduce the risk of emotional crises and the stress on family caregivers.

In July 2024, the China Disabled Persons' Federation, together with the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Civil Affairs, the National Health Commission, the National Healthcare Security Administration, the Central Committee of the Communist Youth League and the All-China Women's Federation, released the Implementation Plan for the Care and Development of Autistic Children (2024-28), drawing a grand blueprint for the future development of autistic children. This program focuses on improving the education quality, social security and medical security of children with autism, and fully guarantees their equal development rights.

In line with these evolving policies, more organizations and companies are beginning to focus on the autism community. Zhao Xin, manager at Dami and Xiaomi, noted that the organization had publicly recruited 10 employees with autism in 2023 and planned to hire more. It calls for the replication of this model across the country so that more individuals with autism can find meaningful employment and lead dignified lives.

XINHUA

Pan Yikai, a youth with autism, works part-time at a bookstore in Shenzhen, Guangdong Province, on March 20, 2024

Liao Juan, an associate professor at the School of Management at Capital Normal University in Beijing, highlighted two major trends and challenges in disability employment in China at a recent meeting on the employment of disabled persons. First, policies are becoming increasingly detailed and the focus of governments at different levels on proportionate employment for people with disabilities is growing. However, the corresponding service capabilities in society have not kept pace. Second, both state-owned and private enterprises are placing greater emphasis on social responsibility, yet some stereotypes about their abilities still need to shift.

Liao urged social organizations to actively develop tools to provide professional assessment services. She emphasized that businesses should match suitable positions to the abilities of individuals with disabilities, while those individuals should also work on enhancing their skills. Only through collaborative efforts from all sectors can we truly achieve inclusive employment for people with disabilities. **BR**

Copyedited by Elsbeth van Paridon
Comments to luyan@cicgamericas.com

Ancient Earth, Modern Recognition

Two Chinese geoparks honored by UNESCO By Ji Jing

Two Chinese geoparks have been officially designated by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) as UNESCO Global Geoparks, the organization announced on April 17. This raises China's total number of UNESCO-recognized geoparks to a world-leading 49.

The two geoparks are Kanbula Geopark in Huangnan Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in Qinghai Province in northwest China and Yunyang Geopark in Chongqing Municipality in southwest China.

The UNESCO Global Geoparks Network, established in 2015, recognizes sites with significant geological heritage that illuminates Earth's history, evolution and climate.

During its 221st session, UNESCO's Executive Board approved the addition of 16 new sites to the Global Geoparks Network, bringing the total number to 229.

UNESCO Director General Audrey Azoulay highlighted the broader significance of UNESCO Global Geoparks. "UNESCO Geoparks have become models for the conservation of geological heritage," she said. "But their role goes much further—they support educational projects, promote sustainable tourism, and keep the knowledge and traditions of these territories alive through the active participation of local and indigenous communities."

Rare landscapes

The Kanbula Geopark is renowned for its striking geological formations shaped by complex natural processes. Highlights include the Maixiu volcanoes and a section of the Yellow River, according to a UNESCO press release.

"While the geopark works to preserve this rich geological heritage, it also plays a vital role in protecting local communities from river-related risks, coordinating warning systems and forecasts, and raising awareness on how to respond to flooding and landslides," UNESCO noted.

Within the park, there are 157 geological relic sites, covering a wide range of features including volcanic landforms, landslide remnants and Danxia landforms. Danxia landforms are unique to China, resembling the country's limestone karst landforms, but made from red sandstone and conglomerate. They are characterized by spectacular red cliffs and a range of erosional landforms, including dramatic natural pillars, towers, ravines, valleys and waterfalls.

The park also preserves stratigraphic structures from three geological periods, offering scientists a valuable window into tectonic movements.

Billions of years of geological processes, combined with uniquely favorable geographical conditions, have created the Kanbula Geopark's breathtaking natural landscapes. The Yellow River, still a translucent jade-green in its upper reaches, reflects the vermilion-hued Danxia landforms. The Longwu River, a primary tributary

XINHUA

The Kanbula Geopark in Huangnan Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in Qinghai Province on June 25, 2023

of the Yellow River, carves precipitous canyons as it flows north to south through the park. Interspersed mountain deciduous broad-leaved forests and evergreen coniferous forests create a natural oxygen oasis on the Qinghai-Xizang Plateau. Rare and precious wildlife, such as Tibetan antelopes and white-lipped deer, roam along the banks of the Yellow River, adding to the wealth of biodiversity.

"The blend of Danxia landforms with turquoise waters creates a landscape of exceptional rarity. This unique combination makes the Kanbula Geopark a coveted destination for geology enthusiasts," Pan Chiqing, Chairman of Qinghai Regong Culture Protection and Development Co. Ltd., told news portal Cnr.cn on April 15.

The Kanbula Geopark is more than just a natural wonder; it's a tapestry woven with diverse cultures, where the vibrant Regong art flourishes. A crucial part of Tibetan Buddhist art in China, Regong art is a genre with wide-ranging influences. Originating from Tibetan culture in the early 15th century, Regong means "golden valley" in the Tibetan language.

For centuries, generations of painters and artisans have drawn inspiration from the area's geological wonders, creating thangkas, murals and sculptures—collectively known as the Regong arts. Thangka, the art of painting religious scrolls used to venerate Buddha, involves applying natural dyes to cloth prepared with patterns sketched in charcoal, using a specialized brush.

Within the park, Tibetan villages are scattered like stars. Those living there have thrived for generations, creating a unique folk culture. Visitors can experience the traditional Tibetan way of life firsthand: savoring fragrant butter tea (made from yak butter and tea leaves), enjoying refreshing highland barley wine, and witnessing passionate Tibetan song and dance performances.

The park also partners with the Kanbula Township Nine-Year Compulsory Education School to foster geological literacy and ecological responsibility among local youth. Through activities like science knowledge contests and study tours, the geological science popularization school aims to ignite children's interest in geological science and cultivate their awareness of protecting geological resources.

"We are increasing investment in the scenic area to improve infrastructure and we are committed to providing excellent services and support for tourists," Pan said. "This not only enhances visitors' experiences but also presents Kanbula's image to the world."

To further enhance the visitor experience, Kanbula Geopark has upgraded 25 tour buses and 19 tour boats and constructed five wooden boardwalks that meander through the landscape, connecting various scenic spots.

XINHUA

The dinosaur fossil wall in the Yunyang Geopark in Chongqing Municipality on January 30

Dinosaur kingdom

The Yunyang Geopark secured its UNESCO designation thanks to its extraordinary landscapes, formed nearly 250 million years ago. The park is home to the famous "Great Wall of Dinosaur Fossils"—an 18-km stretch of rock layers containing fossils dating back approximately 170 million years.

Six new genera or species of dinosaurs have been identified within the park, including the *Yunyangosaurus puanensis* and the *Yuzhoulong qurenensis*.

The geopark also features dramatic karst formations, including one of the world's deepest sinkholes, plunging 335 meters and serving as a major site for scientific research.

The Yunyang Geopark possesses a unique and diverse ecosystem, where mountains and rivers intertwine amid lush vegetation. Its primeval forests and alpine meadows teem with flora and fauna, including 57 species of nationally protected plants and animals, such as the dawn redwood (*Metasequoia glyptostroboides*).

Furthermore, the geopark preserves numerous historical sites and cultural heritage. For example, the Zhangfei Temple, initially built over 1,700 years ago to commemorate Zhang Fei, a renowned general of the Shu Kingdom during the Three Kingdoms Period (220-280), houses an extensive collection of steles, calligraphy and paintings dating back to the Han (202 B.C.-A.D. 220) and Tang (618-907) dynasties.

Chen Daobin, Secretary of the Communist Party of China Yunyang County Committee, stated at an April 18 press conference in Beijing that Yunyang's UNESCO Global Geopark designation will attract more tourists, stimulating cultural tourism projects, creating jobs and enabling local residents to benefit from the growing tourism industry. **BR**

Copyedited by G.P. Wilson
Comments to jijing@cicgamericas.com

Silk Road Surge

How a Chinese cross-border platform captured American attention

By Tao Zihui

"This is from the yellow app?"

"Yes, the 'gate'."

These cryptic exchanges have flooded TikTok comment sections lately, as American users secretly hunt for shopping tips on DHgate, China's cross-border e-commerce platform, using "yellow app" as their code. Until recently, most mistook DHgate for a municipal portal in northwest China.

By April 15 (Beijing time), DHgate had catapulted to second place on the free download chart of the Apple App Store in the U.S., trailing only ChatGPT. The ascent was meteoric: On April 11, it ranked outside the top 300. In just three days, it skyrocketed—reaching No.6 on April 13, No.3 on April 14, and directly to No.2 on April 15, where it remained at the time of writing.

A video released on DHgate's cross-border e-commerce official account reveals that its downloads surged 800 percent month on month in April. On April 13 alone, downloads on the Apple App Store hit 117,500—a 732-percent spike from its 30-day average, with 65,100 downloads in the U.S. Notably, Chinese apps now dominate the top three spots on Apple's U.S. App Store shopping chart.

The U.S. market has fueled over half of DHgate's viral growth, driven by U.S. President Donald Trump's tariff hikes on Chinese imports and TikTok influencer marketing.

"To survive tariffs, U.S. retailers are cutting out traditional importers and buying directly from Chinese manufacturers. DHgate caters to small businesses with lower minimum orders than business-to-business (B2B) giant Alibaba," John Pang, a senior fellow of the Belt and Road Initiative Caucus for Asia Pacific in Malaysia, told *Beijing Review* on April 17.

From pioneer to overnight sensation, DHgate's 20-year journey underscores the enduring power of Chinese manufacturing on the global stage.

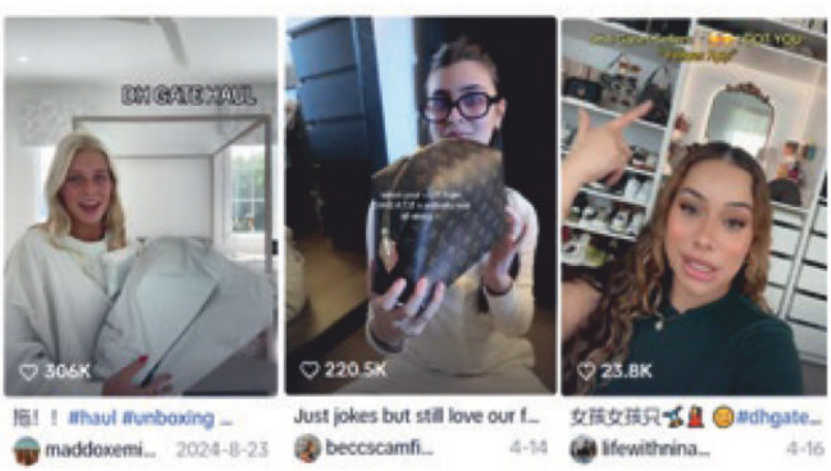
The rise of DHgate

Named after Dunhuang, a historic Silk Road trading hub, DHgate was founded to revive China's trade legacy in the digital age. "We aim to build a 21st-century online Silk Road, rekindling China's glory in global trade and culture," said Wang Shutong, DHgate's founder and CEO, once explaining the platform's origin.

Wang's story mirrors China's Internet evolution. A former professor at Tsinghua University in Beijing, she co-founded Joyo.com—one of the largest online bookstores in China at that time—together with Lei Jun, founder of China's tech giant Xiaomi, in 2000, which Amazon later acquired. In 2004, she pivoted to DHgate—the country's first B2B cross-border platform. With just 10 staff, the team likely never imagined their platform would one day serve 25.4 million suppliers and 59.6 million buyers, and operate 14 overseas warehouses across 225 countries.

Unlike flashy newcomers like e-commerce website Temu, fast fashion retailer SHEIN or TikTok Shop, DHgate has long toiled in obscurity. Launched in 2004, it specialized in small-scale B2B trade, connecting Chinese manufacturers directly to global buyers—circumventing intermediaries with end-to-end services from order management to logistics. Profitability, however, remained elusive until 2020, as DHgate navigated the challenges of early cross-border commerce.

In 2020, DHgate incubated MyyShop, a social commerce platform. "MyyShop bridges the world's hottest marketplaces with China's supply chain," Wang said. By 2022, DHgate Group had formalized a dual-engine strategy around DHgate and MyyShop, investing in marketing, logistics and merchant support to empower factories and brands.



Screenshots of recent TikTok videos related to DHgate, one of China's cross-border e-commerce platforms

Apple's U.S. App Store free app download ranking chart on April 15

The group has also launched a special support plan. On the one hand, it assists companies with cross-border businesses in increasing sales abroad and, on the other hand, it helps manufacturing enterprises further explore overseas markets.

DHgate mainly operates in categories such as 3C electronics [computers, consumer electronics and communications], fashion and household items. It attracts users with extremely low prices and high quality. In the past, as a B2B platform, it mainly circulated within the foreign trade community, but it has recently entered the public eye due to the tariff storm.

Tempestuous times

Trump-era tariffs roiled global trade, stoking U.S. consumer anxiety about rising prices. The University of Michigan's consumer sentiment index plunged 11 percent in April—the second-lowest rating since 1952. April's reading was lower than anything seen during the Great Recession (2007-09).

Amid this uncertainty, TikTok influencers ignited a DHgate craze.

Videos exposing "#LuxuryExposed" went viral, showing Chinese factories producing goods for global brands. One user, @kimba1468, bragged: "I've bought [Canadian fitness apparel retailer] Lululemon and [French luxury fashion brand] Celine direct from China for years—glad everyone's catching on!"

Another, @lauratellsjokes, showcased a handbag she bought on DHgate: "Quality was legit! It came in about two weeks," she said, "They [DHgate] are not paying me for this. I just thought I'd give a real life example of using it."

TikTok user @nikkisviews1, after showing off a made-in-China handbag she'd just received, said: "That's really amazing. But what I really, really want is one of their cars. I swear I'm trying to figure out how to get this and get it over to America."

Under hashtags like #BuyingFromChina, users share guides to Chinese manufacturer websites, while #LuxuryExposed highlights brand markups. Even with tariffs, DHgate prices often undercut U.S. retailers.

Many American users have even taken the initiative to compile guides on "how to buy directly from China," listing Chinese manufacturer websites, introducing them and helping others make informed choices.

Meanwhile, numerous Chinese suppliers and manufacturers have created videos introducing the original equipment manufacturer model to overseas consumers. These videos have directly driven huge traffic to DHgate, with a large influx of American users flocking there to make purchases.

On April 10, DHgate launched the Stock & Save promotional campaign in the U.S., citing tariff uncertainty and stockpiling consumer demand. The platform pledged resource allocation, traffic boosts and targeted marketing to connect merchants with more buyers.

As early as 2018, Wang expressed her hope in a media interview for the emergence of a new generation of online platform enterprises with unique characteristics, emphasizing that these should not only be innovative in their business model or boast a large transaction scale. Instead, the enterprises should embody a philosophy of empowerment and win-win cooperation, avoiding the fear often associated with large entities. "We hope to see a new type of online platform that represents China and the values we advocate—consultation, collaboration and shared benefits—to better facilitate global synergy and development," she said.

Today, Americans are embracing Made in China on platforms ranging from lifestyle and e-commerce app RedNote to DHgate. They are actively seeking Chinese products. Perhaps smart consumers prioritize value in this world. **BR**

Copyedited by Elsbeth van Paridon
Comments to taozihui@cicgamericas.com

A Future in Farewells

Chinese people embrace new, green funeral services By Peng Jiawei

For most Chinese, the Qingming Festival—observed each early spring—is a time for revisiting the past, where families gather to honor deceased loved ones.

However, for a small tribe of Chinese youths, this year's Qingming Festival, which fell on April 4, was also the year's busiest internship season, a time for charting a career path forward.

Hailing from the China Civil Affairs University (CCAU), which was inaugurated in Beijing in 2024, these youngsters are the country's first undergraduates majoring in modern funeral management.

Pang Lin is one of the 150 students who enrolled in the program last year. Like many of her peers, her decision to pursue a college degree in funeral services met with fierce opposition from her family and friends, who would rather she endure the stress and stigma that come with retaking the college entrance examination than enter a profession so intimately tied to death.

Undeterred, Pang enrolled anyway. For her—and for a growing number of young Chinese—the funeral industry is no longer a last resort. Instead, it is an honorable profession, a passion and, in a rapidly aging society, the future.

Majoring in mortality

Few cultures like to talk about death and in China, the subject has long remained a deep-seated taboo.

Therefore, it was all the more surprising that after the CCAU launched the country's first bachelor's degree in modern funeral management in June 2024, competition for admission was fierce.

A shockwave swept through Chinese social media, as the admission score for the course turned out to be 20 to 30 points higher than that of other undergraduate programs at the university, with the highest score reaching 601 out of 750—a mark high enough to secure a spot in more "decent" majors at esteemed universities.

When asked why she chose this field of study, Chen Xuetong, who scored 601, said she first warmed to the idea after discovering an influencer who worked as a mortuary makeup artist, whose humorous take on her job completely changed her perception of the profession. Still, it was eventually the promise of good employment that got her family on board.

Strong job prospects are a key driver behind the recent surge of interest in funeral management studies.

China's population fell for the third year in a row in 2024, as deaths continued to outpace births, data from the National Bureau of Statistics showed. Meanwhile, the population aged 60 and above topped 310 million last year—just a few percentage short of a quarter of the national total and an increase from nearly 297 million recorded in 2023.

"As we face the realities of an aging population head-on, we must address not only how people should age, but also how their final stretch of life is managed," Xu Xiaoling, Associate Dean of the CCAU School of Life Culture, which oversees the program, told *Beijing Review*.

Despite the soaring demand for after-death care, the industry struggles with an acute staff shortage. As of this January, only nine higher vocational colleges nationwide offered training in funeral services, Youth.cn, a Chinese news portal, reported. Some 1,000 students graduate from these programs each year, while around 10,000 vacancies are waiting to be filled at funeral homes nationwide.

Additionally, the bar has also been raised for the qualifications a mortician must now possess, as what was once a purely technical trade has evolved into a deeply human-centered profession.

This shift is best reflected in the highly multidisciplinary design of the CCAU program, which covers everything from anatomy, mortuary makeup, funeral planning, psychology and philosophy, to the history of Chinese funerary traditions.

A walk through the program's many training labs confirms just how diversified and all-encompassing the curriculum is. Alongside conventional spaces for funeral rehearsals, cremation practice and mortuary cosmetics training, the program also features a death simulation center, where students experience, through specialized equipment, the physical sensation of suffocation in the final moments before death.

Some students scream, while others sit in stunned silence. "It was surprisingly quiet," Pang recalled. As the machine tightened around her, she felt neither fear nor panic—only serenity.

While reactions vary, nearly all leave with a renewed respect for life and a deeper understanding of the weight their future profession carries.

"Many students enter the program with only a vague grasp of mortality," Xu said. "The death simulation center was created to offer a visceral encounter with death, prepare them for grief counseling and end-of-life care, and help them better connect with the human side of their profession."

Talking taboo

While the lure of stable careers is definitely a pulling factor drawing many to the course, the newfound interest for the funeral industry among young Chinese also reflects a broader societal shift toward a more open confrontation

XINHUA

Family members scatter flower petals into the Yellow Sea during a collective sea burial on March 28, 2024

with the end of life.

In recent years, Chinese films centered on the funeral industry, including *Lighting Up the Star* and *The Last Dance*, became unexpected smash hits at the domestic box office.

Social media shorts revealing the day-to-day work of funeral professionals, including the one that prompted Chen to study funeral management, regularly attract millions of views.

Even prime-time television is in on the act: On a recent variety show, a man who has been working in the funeral industry for 38 years staged his own mock funeral, which sparked a heated public debate on the many stereotypes that still haunt the sector.

"In China, things are starting to change—people are talking more openly about death and there's a growing acceptance of the funeral profession," Xu said, adding that, while six students eventually did not enter the program due to family disapproval, those who enrolled show a genuine passion for the work.

The modern afterlife

As cultural attitudes toward death continue to shift, China's funeral industry is also undergoing a quiet revolution, by which people are moving away from traditional funeral and burial rituals and embracing new practices and philosophies of death.

On March 25, 38 bereaved families from Jinhua, Zhejiang Province, gathered in Zhoushan, another city in the province, for a collective sea burial during which the ashes of their loved ones were sprinkled into the sea—not with joss paper, but with flower petals.

"Sea burial is not just a farewell, but also a celebration of life and a gift to those who come after us," Jiang Yan, who had just lost her husband, said at the event.

In recent years, green burials—where ashes are scattered or biodegradable urns are placed beneath trees, on lawns, in flowerbeds or at sea—have become popular alternatives to traditional burials in public cemeteries.

"It is not just about how the deceased is buried. In fact, sustainability has permeated every aspect of our course and the industry at large," Xu said, noting that simple ceremonies are replacing lavish displays, whereas spiritual remembrance is gradually replacing material offerings.

A major engine driving the industry's green transformation is technology. From 3D-printed biodegradable urns and smart, eco-friendly cremation systems to virtual memorial halls and the collection of photos, social media posts and other online assets of the deceased, the digital age is profoundly redefining how memories are preserved.

With rapid advances in AI, people are also turning to "AI resurrection," which uses deep learning and voice-cloning technologies to create digital incarnations of the deceased, as a means to maintain conversations with their loved ones and help heal their grief.

These trends were also built into the CCAU's funeral management program. It has a special hall dedicated to training students in digital memorial services. Surrounded by electronic screens on all four sides, onto which AI avatars of the deceased and their digital legacies are projected, the room provides a space where the bereaved can share the life stories of the departed and pass on family narratives for future generations.

However, while many embrace these shifts in funeral norms, others remain wary. In some rural regions, grand funerals are still seen as proof of filial piety, and green burials are dismissed as disrespectful; legal guidelines for inheriting digital legacies are yet to be established; and the unauthorized "AI resurrection" of public figures has sparked fierce debate over whether the technology comforts the bereaved or deepens their sorrow.

For Xu, while tackling these challenges requires the coordinated and sustained efforts of all sectors of society, education has a central role to play in slowly resolving these issues.

A degree in funeral management is not merely about the technical aspects of burial or cremation, but also about spreading a new culture of death dedicated to sustaining the dignity of the dead while acknowledging the needs of the living, she concluded. **BR**

Copyedited by Elsbeth van Paridon
Comments to pengjiawei@cicgamericas.com

Observing China

An American news commentator's 20 years living in and studying China By Li Nan

When Einar Tangen, an American entrepreneur, first arrived in Beijing on January 7, 2000, the city lacked appeal to him. "The scenery wasn't great. The city was not modern. Everything was dusty," he told *Beijing Review*.

Born in 1960 in Washington, D.C., Tangen has mixed heritage from the U.S. and the Republic of Korea. After finishing law school in the midwest of the United States, he first became a partner in a small law firm, then created a financial information company, started a hospitality business, developed real estate, and worked as an investment banker in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. He also served in various city, state and national organizations, including as chairman of the State of Wisconsin's International Trade Council, which advises the governor and the Wisconsin legislature on international trade policy and promotion.

In 2000, Tangen led a delegation of engineers and legal professionals, spending about three weeks in China. At the time, he had no idea that the country would become his home for the next two decades.

Interpreting China

During that trip, Tangen visited Beijing and Qinghai, a then-underdeveloped province in northwest China. Regardless of the location, he noticed a common trait among the Chinese people: an eagerness to learn.

On multiple occasions, strangers approached him, whether in a crowded Beijing subway or along a remote Qinghai road, saying, "I'm so glad you're here. We want to learn." Tangen was deeply touched by their desire for knowledge. After returning to Milwaukee, he remarked to a group of friends, "If there is going to be a Renaissance during my lifetime, it will be in China." Despite many of them having extensive business in China, they thought Tangen was a bit optimistic.

Over the following years, Tangen made several visits to China. The more he came, the stronger his desire to come to China became. In 2005, he shared his plans with friends and family. Some were shocked, saying, "What's wrong with you? You are somebody here in Milwaukee. In China you will be no one."

That same year, Tangen relocated to China. His two children remained in the U.S. to complete their education but visited him during summer holidays. Eventually, both independently decided to move to China after university.

A career in China

After settling in China, Tangen became involved in a wide variety of projects, including helping his partner establish an international architecture, interiors and furnishings company. On August 10, 2008, three days after the opening of the Beijing 2008 Olympic Summer Games, he co-hosted the Olympic Truce Awards, a sideline event organized by the Truce Foundation of the U.S. and the U.S. Olympic Committee. It was during this event that he met Huang Youyi, then Vice President of China International Publishing Group, now known as China International Communications Group.

Huang encouraged him to write about China, given his expertise in economic development. Over the following years, Tangen authored books on regional development, including studies on Kunshan City in Jiangsu Province and Fengtai District in Beijing. "Writing books is an opportunity to learn. It taught me how government works in China and how it differs from other governments," he told *Beijing Review*.

He was later invited to appear on television, and today he participates in over 10

ZHANG WEI

programs per week on TV news channels in China and several other countries across the world, including the BBC, Bloomberg, Singapore-based CNA, Russia Today, Al Jazeera... "Having a broad background in law, politics, economics, finance and economic development allows me to analyze the differences between China and other countries. I tend to focus on facts and outcomes," he said. He also delivers lectures and speeches and is a member of three think tanks, including the Beijing-based Taihe Institute.

Tangen said he has been most deeply impressed by China's long-term planning mechanisms. The Chinese Government operates on five-year plans that remain consistent despite administrative personnel changes. "It is a huge apparatus that adapts and evolves."

In contrast, he observed that in the U.S., policy shifts drastically with administration change. "It's an on-and-off switch. Things the previous administration was trying to do are undone. Long-term planning is almost impossible," he observed. "If you fail to plan, you plan to fail." He added that "China's ways of problem solving are not perfect, but it's far more effective than anything else I've seen anywhere else."

While acknowledging China's challenges, he pointed out, "What I really admire about China is they see a problem and they say, 'This is a problem, let's solve it. What do we have to do?' And they'll keep trying until they do solve it."

By contrast, he feels that in the U.S., politicians often avoid addressing issues until after the next election cycle. But "after an election, they start thinking about the next election and very little gets done," he said.

Though some have labeled him "an old China hand who speaks out for China," Tangen resists the characterization. "I don't speak for China. No one pays me to be an advocate. My approach is based on my research, observations and the results," he said.

American news commentator Einar Tangen in Beijing on March 14

Xinjiang insights

Tangen has traveled extensively in China, including two visits to Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region. His second visit, in September 2021, was for a documentary project with Miao Xiaojuan Studio at Xinhua News Agency. The goal was to explore public perspectives on democracy, freedom and human rights.

In Xinjiang, he was able to meet random people in the streets, and he found that people's focus and aspirations were the same as those of the middle class in America, Europe, Africa, and the rest of Asia: increasing household income, saving for their children's education, taking vacations to enjoy life, accessing quality healthcare, taking care of their elders...

When he asked working mothers, "How do you feel about your children learning standard Chinese?" all responded that learning standard Chinese would improve their children's job prospects. "I want my children to be doctors or other professionals. I want them to have more than I have had myself," one mother said.

"There's a whole new generation of Uygur kids who are growing up speaking their national language. They can go anywhere in China and they're not relegated to working as farmers, or in a restaurant or as entertainers. They can go to university; and with an education, hard work and a little luck, they can succeed like everyone else in China. That's the Xinjiang that I know," Tangen said.

Decades of change

As of January 17, Tangen had been living in China for 20 years. "It's been an amazing journey to be here for 20 years, to watch the energy and time the government has put into its society, for example, making the urban environment more livable," he said.

According to data from the Beijing Municipal Forestry and Park Bureau, the total number of parks in Beijing reached 1,100 in 2024, 961 more than in the year Tangen arrived. Last year, Beijing added approximately 666.67 hectares of new forest and green areas, bringing the city's forest coverage rate to 44.95 percent and the annual carbon sink of forest and green land to 9.6 million tons.

Using his own neighborhood as an example, he recalled that parks were once rudimentary spaces with basic seating and exercise equipment. Now, there are beautifully landscaped areas throughout China's cities, including along rivers like the Liangma River in Beijing. They are vibrant community spaces where people walk, have picnics, dance, play music instruments, exercise and even swim.

For Tangen, the last 20 years have been the Renaissance he anticipated and he looks forward to seeing more in the future. **BR**

Copyedited by G.P. Wilson
Comments to linan@cicgamericas.com

中国儿童少年基金会
CHINA CHILDREN AND TEENAGERS' FUND

WECHAT QR CODE

SPRING BUD PROJECT

TOGETHER LET'S HELP LITTLE FLOWERS BLOSSOM

CHINA MOSAIC

Weekly video commentary direct from Beijing

中国3分钟

中国网

china.com.cn china.org.cn

Scan to watch China Mosaic

A New Race Of Robots

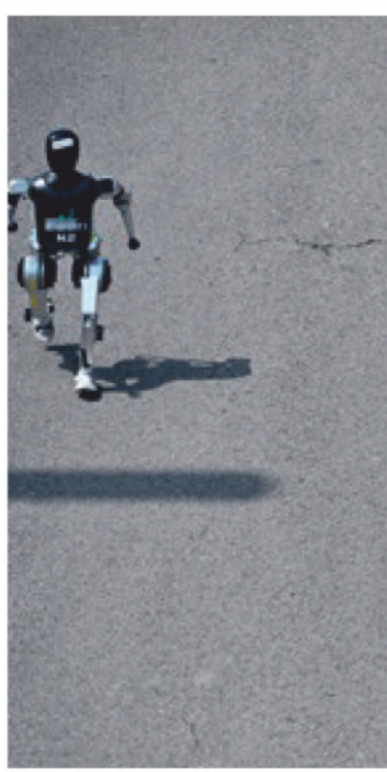
The 2025 Beijing E-Town Half-Marathon and Humanoid Robot Half-Marathon was held on April 19. In a global first, humanoid robots from more than 20 companies ran alongside about 12,000 humans on the 21.0975-km course but on a seperate track.

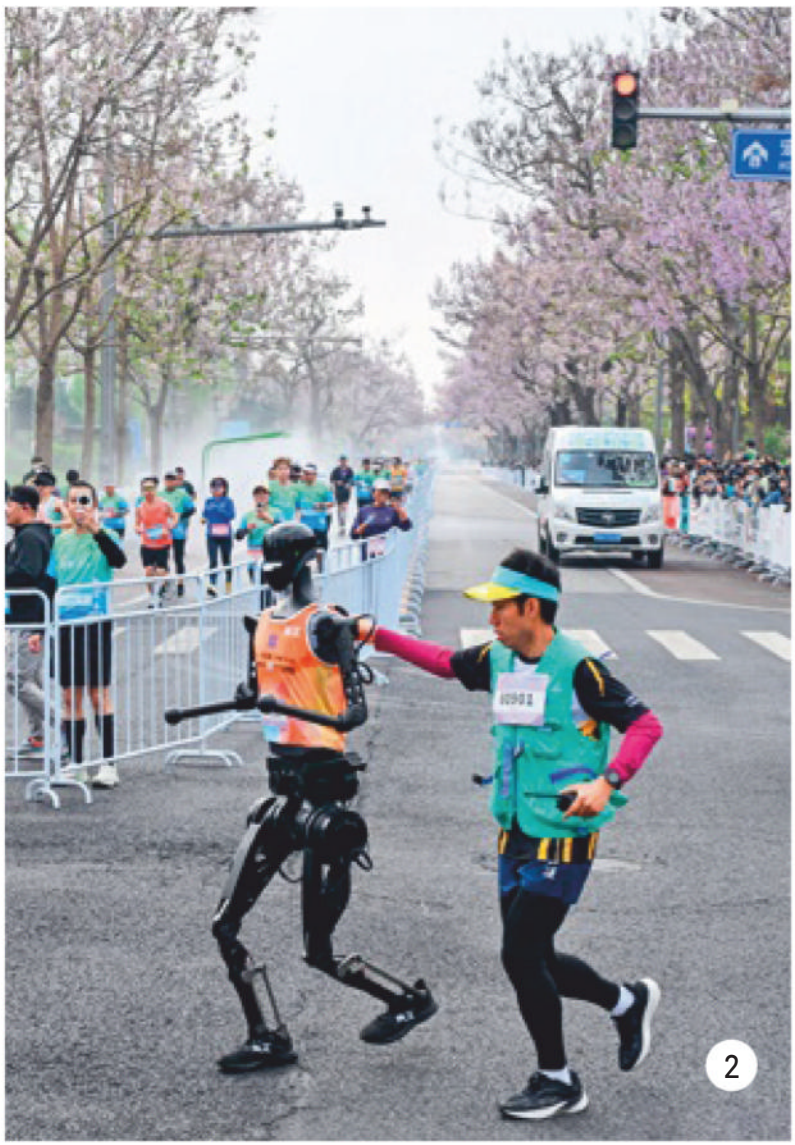
The humanoid robots differed greatly in appearance, height and movement patterns. The event required the robots to possess top-level autonomous navigation and organizers discouraged mid-competition battery swaps and robot replacement. In the end, robots from six teams managed to complete the race. Tiangong Ultra developed by the Beijing Humanoid Robot Innovation Center, became the champion of the robot division with a time of 2:40:42.

In the human division, Ethiopian runners won both the men's and women's half-marathons in a time of 1:2:36 and 1:11:7, respectively. **BR**

(*Text and photos by Wei Yao*)

Copyedited by G. P. Wilson
Comments to weiyao@cicgamericas.com





1. Race winner Tiangong Ultra (second right), the two runners up and their respective teams receive medals and prize money

2. Tiangong Ultra runs under the guidance of a human team member

3. The 1.2-meter-tall humanoid robot Noetix Robotics N2 finishes in second place

4. The humanoid robot competitors attract much attention from their human counterparts

Should Electronic Screens Give Way to Blackboards?

LI SHIKONG

Recently, residents of Xi'an, Shaanxi Province, have called on the city's mayor to ban electronic screens in schools and reinstate blackboards, arguing screen-based instruction and learning is causing eye fatigue and vision problems among students.

Concerns about electronic screens are not new. Last year, parents in Shenzhen, Guangdong Province, suggested reducing the amount of time elementary school students spend on electronic screens in the classroom.

Additionally, starting this semester, an elementary school in Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province, has begun eliminating electronic screens from all classes every Friday morning, and teachers are prohibited from using courseware.

While some parents are becoming more concerned about the use of screens, others argue their use is an unstoppable trend, as they can greatly enhance teaching efficiency. Moreover, the use of electronic screens does not necessarily result in myopia among students. The key is to strike a balance between the convenience of multimedia devices and the protection of students' eyesight.

Xiang Xiangrong (Tidenews.com.cn): Whether electronic screens affect eyesight depends on multiple factors: Different screen parameters have varying impacts; the viewing distance and duration of use also play roles. Generally speaking, it is not recommended for children to stare at electronic screens continuously for more than 15 minutes.

The synergy between education and technology is an inevitable trend and electronic screens serve as highly effective teaching aids. For instance, when explaining geometric shapes, teachers can use screens to display multi-angle views of the figures. Similarly, in teaching geographical phenomena or historical events, electronic screens present content far more vividly than textbooks ever could. As auxiliary tools in modern education, multimedia devices like electronic screens help overcome the limitations of traditional classrooms while enhancing both teaching efficiency and students' learning experience.

Schools can take measures to mitigate the negative impact of electronic screens on students' eyesight. For example, they can replace screens with poor clarity and significant glare with higher-quality, eye-protective products featuring low blue light emission and flicker-free technology. There should also be a proper schedule for screen usage to avoid prolonged continuous use. A document issued by the Ministry of Education limits screen time for teaching to 30 percent of total lesson time. Despite potential drawbacks, the advantages of this technology remain clear.

Hu Qi'an (gmw.cn): The overuse of electronic screens, which are now constantly vying for children's attention, can create an over-reliance and even diminish teacher-student interaction.

While the prevalence of eye fatigue among students using electronic screens is a legitimate concern, it's improper to place all the blame on the technology itself.

Electronic screens are just one tool in the multimedia toolbox of modern education. They are neither inherently good nor bad, much like the smartphones we are widely using today. Today's teaching has evolved far beyond the days of blackboards and chalk. Used appropriately, new technologies can enrich resources, expand perspectives and stimulate students' minds. Many parents' aversion to screens stems from schools' mandates for teachers to use multimedia exclusively. This practice can be refined, but not to be rejected entirely.

A positive attitude is one that embraces sound pedagogy, puts student needs first and utilizes all tools, including screens, in evidence-based ways. The right path forward is to take advantage of new technologies, but not to reject them just because of certain drawbacks, especially when the negative impacts can be minimized if they are properly used. **BR**

Copyedited by G.P. Wilson
Comments to panxiaoqiao@cicgamericas.com

Beijing Review Vol.68 No.1 January 2, 2025

by Beijing Review (Author) Format: Kindle Edition

See all formats and editions

Kindle
$0.99

Read with Our Free App

Beijing Review **is China's only national English newsweekly published by China International Communications Group Center for the Americas.**

Product Details

ASIN: BOBTKKP3G4
Publisher: Beijing Review (January 2, 2025)
Publication Date: January 2, 2025
Language: English
File Size: 1396 KB
Text-to-Speech: Enabled
Screen Reader: Supported
Enhanced Typesetting: Enabled
X-Ray: Not Enabled
Word Wise: Enabled
Sticky Notes: On Kindle Scribe
Print Length: 90 pages

Now available on amazon

In addition to *Beijing Review*, CICG Americas publishes *China Hoy*, a monthly publication launched in 1960, aiming to bridge the gap between China and the Spanish-speaking world—particularly Latin-American countries.

Website: www.chinahoy.com.cn